WE REMEMBER OUR HERITAGE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

1880—1976

Florence Winstead Lee

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1880—1976

Florence Winstead Lee

PREFACE

This is the history of the First Baptist Church, Rocky Mount, N.C., from 1880 to 1976, in which we reverently recall how God has worked out his purposes through the members of his Body in this church.

We stand in awe and amazement as we view his accomplishments, using our fragile strength, undeterred by our weakness, sin, and little faith.

May the remembering inspire us and our successors to deeper faith, greater spiritual strength and purer lives, so that the years to come will prove more worthy of our Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

Florence W. Lee
Church Historian

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#21183

DEDICATION

This history is lovingly dedicated to all who worship in this place, past, present, and future generations.

May the reader find in its pages a warning, a guide, and a beckoning hope.

Dr. John D. Cave

MESSAGE from OUR MINISTER

"I never weary of great churches. Mankind was never so happily inspired as when he made a cathedral", wrote Robert Louis Stevenson. During the past century, the saints of Rocky Mount have been engaged in making a great church. The steel, the stones, the stained glass windows have been united at the corner of Church Street and Western Avenue, giving visible evidence that men and women, boys and girls have taken seriously the injunction of being "co-laborers with God."

However, First Baptist is older than the buildings we see or the people we have known who worshipped therein. The

church is old in the sense that it is a continuation of the life of Israel, the people of God. It is new in the sense that it is founded on the revelation, made through Jesus Christ, of God's final message for mankind. The thousands that have identified with its message and mission haven't given their allegiance to a lost cause, but one of the most permanent institutions of history. They have entered in league, not with something local or temporal, but with the divine personality that governs the universe itself.

The church of the living God was here before these facilities were erected by our forefathers. The land was made and held in reserve by the Creator for this edifice of worship. The gospel we would proclaim was conceived from a crucified-resurrected Christ event. Down the labyrinthian ways of history many strong ambassadors have brought its message to us. We are indeed debtors to the many who have made First Baptist Church a reality here in Rocky Mount.

On June 1, 1880, 96 years ago, something significant happened here. There was a mystical movement in the minds and hearts of nine believing individuals. The stirring within their souls could not be silent. There arose a mind to build, a will to work, and a desire to share a redemptive and edifying message. These "living stones" brought together men and matter to form an edifice of divine worship, a place for scriptural study and Christian fellowship. Every generation which has passed through these ten decades have poured life and love into the realization of God's kingdom here in Rocky Mount, as it is already realized in heaven. We express our love and appreciation for the labors of many lives making possible this church.

The past is prologue. We look back in humble faith only to calibrate the compass before advancing forward with hope into the uncertainties of tomorrow. Standing on the pinnacle

of great past achievements, we look beyond as Moses on Mount Pisgah viewed Canaan. What do we see beyond Jordan? What is out there in our Canaan for future conquests?

I think the names of the streets which border First Baptist give us the clue. In front, it is Church Street, a main thoroughfare through the heart of Rocky Mount. Christ's church must be kept in the very center of community life. The citizens must be conscious that God's message and people are here to stay. We will not be intimidated. We will remain true to our calling, knocking at the gates of hell, releasing people from bondage, sin and death.

Being a church in the inner city will be difficult, demanding and dangerous, for its servants must be involved in social, political, economic and moral areas of the community life. However, at these points the individual's existence is also under assault. If we default by not heralding a redemptive message, both community and individual will be lost. For God's sake and other's let us always be His church in the center of Rocky Mount.

There is Western Avenue which runs the length of our facilities. The "West" recalls the frontier, the place of action, conquest and colonization. We cannot stay "inner city." God cannot be kept within four walls. We must advance the action to every frontier, out past the city limits into the suburbia, and address ourselves to minister to those who seek serenity and the security and seclusion of their community. Redemption must work on their soul as well as upon the concrete streets of downtown.

Furthermore, First Baptist must advance beyond Nash and Edgecombe Counties to relate to a world in dire need of life's necessities, man's disciplines and God's grace. No church can live long that has no great anguish on its heart, nor great

redemptive music upon its lips. We must not be content in serving only the needs within, but the needs of those without. We go West, pursuing the frontier, colonizing the hearts of men and community wherever we go. Our address challenges us to enlarge the circumference of our concern, to keep our church reaching out that the world may know Him.

In the year 2076, one hundred years hence, should Christ tarry and another lift the pen and record the history of First Baptist of the past century, what will the author write? Let these be the words.

"We came. We placed and committed our total self to the work in this location.

We saw. We pursued the vision of what God wanted us to do.

We conquered. We claimed the city for Christ."

John D. Cave

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Special Historical Committee gratefully acknowledges its indebtedness to the persons named herein. To write a history covering so many years would be utterly impossible without the faithful labors of those members who have preceded us and of those who are our contemporaries. Our older adults have gladly shared their memories with the committee. Mrs. S.T. Anderson, with her keen mind and sharp memory, has been especially helpful in this area.

Some have made outstanding contributions in other ways. Mr. Sam Arrington, church clerk and chairman of the Standing Historical Committee, has carefully looked after and preserved the church records for many years. Mr. W.B. Middleton, long a church history enthusiast, has worked for years gathering materials relative to our Sunday School and other churches growing out of the mother church.

Many of our members have written brief histories which were prepared for special occasions. All have been of inestimable value. These writers have been Mr. T.M. Arrington, Mr. T.A. Avera, Dr. George L. Parker, Mrs. W.D. Farmer, Mrs. George Batchelor, Mrs. George Gorham, Sr., Mrs. S.T. Anderson, Mr. Turner Coley (Royal Ambassador Extraordinary), and Mrs. Ruth Bell who wrote a historical dramatization called "The Prophecy of the Pipes."

Special gratitude goes to Mr. John R. Woodard, Director of the Baptist Historical Collection at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C., who graciously researched old Biblical Recorders and other materials for biographical data on our early pastors.

To the members of the Special Historical Committee, my

peers and co-laborers who accepted the task of researching and publishing this history, I can only say a heart-felt "thank you." It gives me great pleasure and satisfaction to pay homage to my committee listed below.

Ex officio members:

Mr. Sam Arrington, Resource, Mr. W.B. Middleton, Resource

Dr. Ronald W. Higdon and Dr. John D. Cave, pastors

Mr. A.H. Phillips, Jr., Mr. Earl Posey, Mr. George Hooks, Jr., and Mr. Don Johnson, Chairmen of the Board of Deacons from 1973 through 1976

Research members:

Mrs. George Hooks, Jr., Mrs. J.A. Delbridge, Sr.,
Mrs. A.L. Stancil, Mrs. Sam Smith, Mrs. Mack Brown,
Miss Fannie Lee Carter, Miss Emily Williams,
Mr. Roger Lamb, Mr. John Privott, Mr. Harry Griffin,
Mr. Bill Nelms, Mr. Russell Edmondson, Mr. A.L. Stancil

Mrs. John R. Lee, Chairman and Historian

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CHAPTER I

WE REMEMBER OUR BEGINNING

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." King James Version Philippians 1:6.

To stand firm for 96 years in a rapidly changing world evokes gratitude and praise to God for his preserving and sustaining grace through all our vicissitudes. What memories these years bring to mind! As we eagerly anticipate our One Hundredth Birthday, let us look backward at how things were that day on June 1, 1880, when little Rocky Mount Baptist Church was constituted with only nine charter members.

In spite of the overwhelming changes since 1880, a few places have remained relatively the same. For instance, the Rocky Mount Mills, built in 1818 at the Falls of the Tar River, twice burned and twice rebuilt, is still operating at the same site. The rocky prominence to the north of the Falls still remains the sole reason for our city's name.

The Primitive Baptist Church built on the south bank of the Tar about 1744 was not only the first Baptist Church in this area, but the only Baptist Church until November, 1871, when the negro brethren formed what is now the Mount Zion Baptist Church on West Thomas Street.

The Primitive Baptist Church has co-existed with the town itself and has continuously exerted a powerful influence. Many of our members are from Primitive Baptist backgrounds.

Another landmark still extant, important both historically and architecturally, is the "Old Lewis Place" or "Stonewall." Built in 1836 on the north bank of the Tar close to the Falls, "Stonewall" is a rich heritage from ante-bellum days. One other remnant of the past is Soden's Shoe Shop which has been in continuous operation at the same site since 1866.

In 1840 when the Wilmington-Weldon Railroad was completed, the little village of Rocky Mount chose to remove itself from the northern bank of the Tar to one mile south, thus linking its destiny with the new mode of transportation. In 1867 the village became a little town, duly incorporated, but there was still no white missionary Baptist Church. The Methodist Church was organized in 1856. The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd moved into its new building in 1877.

Missionary Baptists were few in number but the local saloons were plentiful—21 in fact. Social life also included dancing, the love for which eventually evolved into the June German as we know it today, and for which Rocky Mount has become widely known.

Rich farm lands, a mill and the railroad drew new people to the struggling community. Stores and offices clustered along

the sides of the track like baby chicks seeking shelter under their mother hen. And the town began to grow.

A prominent Baptist layman, Mr. Noah Biggs, lived in Scotland Neck. He was a leader in the Tar River Baptist Association and the Scotland Neck Baptist Church. He was also a well-to-do business man and peanut grower.

For some time Mr. Biggs had been encouraging the handful of missionary Baptists in Rocky Mount to step out in faith and form a church fellowship. Finally it happened! The meeting took place in the parlor of the old Gray Hotel, kept by Mrs. Louisa J. Hammond. According to the first record book of our church, this is how it was:

"A council consisting of Revs. J.D. Hufham, J.E. Carter, T.H. Pritchard, and R.T. Vann and Brethren Noah Biggs of Scotland Neck Church, R.E. Riddick of Enfield Church, and E.P. Powell of Conacenary Church met at Rocky Mount June 1st, 1880. Rev. J.D. Hufham was chosen moderator and Rev. T.H. Pritchard Secretary of the Council. After reading 1st Chap. of Ephesians the Moderator led in prayer after which the following persons presented letters and were organized into the Rocky Mount Baptist Church, adopting a Church Covenant and accepting what is known as the New Hampshire Confession of Faith as their religious belief: J.W. Portis and Ann E. Portis of Wilson Ch.; H.D. Avera and Florence J. Arrington of Philadelphia Ch.; Louisa Hammond of Peach Tree Ch.; G.M. Lindsey and Mary Lindsey of Kinston Ch.; and Mary Anna Thomas representing an extinct Baptist Church.

"Bro. J.H. Thorp of Chapel Hill Ch. and Sister T.D. Smith of Goldsboro Ch. signified their willingness to join the Church so soon as their letters could be received. Thereupon the Moderator declared the Church duly organized, according to

the law of Christ, and the Council gave the right hand of fellowship to the newly constituted Church.

"The Church then elected Bro. H.D. Avera as Clerk and appointed the next meeting for business to be held on the 2nd Sabbath of June. After prayer by Rev. R.T. Vann the Council adjourned.

(Signed) J.D. Hufham
Moderator

T.H. Pritchard
Secretary, June 1st, 1880"

This copy of the original record is immediately followed by the Church Covenant and the New Hampshire Articles of Faith.

Church Covenant

As we trust we have been brought by divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the influence of his Spirit to give ourselves up to him, so we do now solemnly covenant with each other, that God enabling us, we will walk together in brotherly love; that we will exercise a Christian watchfulness and care over each other and faithfully warn, rebuke and admonish one another, as the case shall require; that we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor omit the great duty of prayer, both for ourselves and others; that we will participate in each other's joys and endeavor, with tenderness and sympathy, to bear each other's burdens and sorrows; that we will earnestly endeavor to bring up such as may be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that we will seek divine aid to enable us to walk circumspectly and watchfully in the world, denying ungodliness and every worldly lust; that we will strive together

for the support of a faithful evangelical ministry among us; that we will endeavor, by example and effort, to win souls to Christ; and through life, amidst evil report and good report, seek to live to the glory of Him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

And may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

New Hampshire Confession of Faith
Articles of Faith

1st. The Scriptures

We believe that the whole Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction, that it has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

2nd. The True God

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the God-head there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the

Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

3rd. The Fall of Man

We believe that the Scriptures teach that Man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but by choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin without defense or excuse.

4th. The Way of Salvation

We believe the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that, having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven, inviting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

5th. Justification

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is Justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the

Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

6th. The Freeness of Salvation

We believe the Scriptures teach that the great blessings of Salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith, and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own determined depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel, which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

7th. Regeneration

We believe the Scriptures teach that in order to be saved sinners must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith and newness of life.

8th. Repentance and Faith

We believe the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplications for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest

and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

9th. God's Purpose of Grace

We believe the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance, and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

10th. Sanctification

We believe that the Scriptures teach that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness, that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means . . . especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer.

11th. Preservation of the Saints

We believe the Scriptures teach that such only are real believers as endure until the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches

over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

12th. The Law and Gospel

We believe the Scriptures teach that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just and good, and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law is the one great end of the Gospel and of the means of Grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church.

13th. A Gospel Church

We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by his word; that its only scriptural officers are Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles of Timothy and Titus.

14th. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian Baptism is immersion in water of a believer into the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privilege of church relation and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to com-

memorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by self-examination.

15th. The Christian Sabbath

We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's day or Christian Sabbath; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreation by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God.

16th. The Gospel and Government

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for conscientiously, honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth.

17th. Righteous and Wicked

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and wicked; that such only, as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

18th. The World to Come

We believe the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day, Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment and the righteous to

endless joy, and that this judgment will forever fix the final state of men in heaven or hell on principles of righteousness.

The Church did not call itself the First Baptist Church, but the Rocky Mount Baptist Church. It is uncertain when the name change took place, but the Associational record shows that on "October 13, 1907, the new division of the Tar River Association convened in its first annual session with the First Baptist Church, Rocky Mount, N.C. at 7:45 o'clock." This was the beginning of the Roanoke Association (when the Tar River Association was divided). No doubt our church was called "First" much before this, but the above record is the first found in writing. By this time (1907) our church had mothered three other churches: North Rocky Mount, Arlington Street, and Calvary.

From the first our church was the recipient of associational mission funds. The record shows that "Rev. J.E. Carter, pastor at Tarboro and Rocky Mount Churches, received $266.66 from the Tar River Association for 1880." Rocky Mount Church also received help from the State Mission Board. Times were hard and the tiny membership struggled valiantly, even with help, to meet their expenses.

Rev. Joseph E. Carter was called as the first pastor, preaching once a month. Mr. H.D. Avera was appointed Church Clerk and immediately provided a beautiful brown and red leather record book, which, fortunately, is still in excellent condition. Since the new church had no sanctuary, meetings were held in the old Masonic Lodge. Later, services were held in the old Methodist Church and then in the Presbyterian Church. This was possible because each church met only once a month.

At the business meeting June 13, 1880, a building committee was appointed with authority to buy a lot upon which to build a church. Brothers J.H. Thorp, H.D. Avera, and G.M. Lindsey served on this committee. Later, Brother W.H. Avera, father of H.D. Avera, was also appointed.

On December 12, 1880, the committee reported the purchase of a lot on Church Street, the site of our present sanctuary, for the sum of $200. They also reported that our friend, Brother Noah Biggs, had instructed them to draw upon him for $750 toward the construction of the meeting house.

The minutes of the N.C. Baptist State Convention for 1880 carries the following report about our church as given by Rev. J.E. Carter: "The cause at Rocky Mount is still looking upward and onward. My usual labors have been given to that church. Since my last (report) we have purchased one of the best lots in the village at a cost of $200.00 for which provision for payment has been made, and an accumulating fund is daily growing to begin and build a handsome church edifice. With a new house and an uncommonly promising little membership, in spirit and in character, we hope to see great things done for us by the Lord, our Master."

Our records fail to show when the church was completed or dedicated, but it was sometime in 1881. Dr. T.H. Pritchard, then President of Wake Forest College, preached the dedicatory sermon in the white frame building with its steeple and bell.

May 15, 1882, Brothers T.M. Arrington and C.F. Ellen were elected the first deacons. In the same year, Mrs. Arrington and two other ladies formed the first missionary society. By the next September 4, 1883, the church membership had increased to 31 and it was deemed necessary to begin a Sunday School. Brother C.H. Harris was elected the first Superintendent. Meanwhile, Rev. Carter had resigned and

Rev. W.P. Blake served as pastor part of 1882-1883. Neither of these pastors had lived in Rocky Mount, but in 1884 Rev. J.T. Lynch came as pastor, the first one to live in town. This precipitated a crisis, for Rev. Lynch was a bachelor and there were no bedrooms available. To meet the emergency, on February 10, 1884, a committee was appointed to raise money to build him a "study," a small house of one room. This was built on the corner of our lot and became the beginning of the parsonage.

All this was accomplished with the devoted help of the Ladies' Aid Society. It must be remembered that when the church lot was purchased there was no street where Western Avenue is now, but the lot was bought with the understanding that when it was needed the street would be forthcoming, thus insuring our access to two streets. We had a parking area already! In those days, there was a little wooded place across in front of our church where the city parking lot is now, and it was used for parking buggies and wagons filled with straight chairs.

Our First Meeting House
Baraca Class—1909

In May, 1885, we started having preaching services twice a month. On September 4, 1904, the church voted to become self-supporting, no longer to be under the care of the Mission Board. Rev. Braxton Craig was our preacher then. The church, from its inception, had been continuously receiving assistance from the State Board.

The first steps were taken to build our present sanctuary in 1907. Dr. I.M. Mercer worked unceasingly to raise the money to build a fitting sanctuary to the glory of God. The building committee consisted of Dr. Mercer, pastor and chairman; T.C. Rowland, treasurer; E.W. Shearin, J.H. Short, R.P. Gibson, S.N. Edwards, A.C. Jones, W.R. Lancaster, George L. Parker, W.D. Joyner, I.J. Dowdy, J.D. Christian, C.H. Smith, H.J. Bolton, and T.M. Arrington. A sub-committee having immediate charge of the work was E.W. Shearin, chairman, J.H. Short, and A.C. Jones.

The people all had a mind to work, so on November 4, 1911, at 3:30 in the afternoon, Mrs. Florence J. Arrington, the only surviving charter member, laid the first brick of our present sanctuary. Mrs. Arrington commemorated this event in a long poem which is still extant.

Our new sanctuary was completed in the Fall of 1912 with the exception of the basement (left in the rough) and the absence of pews in the balcony. We were debt free at completion, thanks to the generosity of members, friends, and the indefatigable efforts of our women. What a way to go for the Lord! Now came the time for joy, worship, celebration, and praise to God. What a celebration! It lasted three days and involved the whole community! Friday evening, March 14, 1913, the five services began with Mr. T.M. Arrington reading a brief history of the church. Then addresses were given by Rev. M.L. Kesler and Dr. W.V. Savage. Saturday evening,

March 15, Rev. Braxton Craig addressed the subject "The Duty of the Individual to His Church." Rev. W.N. Johnson spoke on the subject "The Debt of the Church to the World at Large," and Dr. J.D. Hufham reminisced about the work in Eastern Carolina. Sunday morning, March 16, Rev. R.T. Vann preached the Sermon and the building committee gave their report.

Sunday afternoon, March 16, greetings were brought from the other Baptist Churches by Rev. N.R. Shepherd; from the Pastors' Conference by Dr. W.D. Morton; from other denominations by Rev. H.C. Boblitt; and from the community by Rev. L.P. Howard. Sunday night, March 16, concluding addresses were given by Rev. Hight C. Moore and Rev. G.M. Duke. As a crowning touch, a Communion service was presented to the church in memory of Ida Morris Christian Sproat.

At this time, our church had 450 members and the other three Baptist Churches we had mothered had 440 members. In thirty-three years, God had given the increase from nine to almost nine hundred. Truly it was a time to rejoice!

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Jude 24-25.

CHAPTER II

WE REMEMBER OUR EARLY PASTORS

"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." I Tim. 2:7

We have been most fortunate in the caliber of men sent by God to be our pastors. All twenty of them have been outstanding and far above the average, while many have emerged as giants in Baptist leadership.

Rev. Joseph E. Carter

Our first pastor, Rev. Joseph E. Carter, only son of Percy and Priscilla Carter, was born in Murfreesboro, N.C., Feb. 6, 1836. He prepared himself as a lawyer, but in January, 1859, renewed his Christian profession, was restored to the church and licensed to preach that same month.

He graduated from the Theological Seminary at Murfreesboro, Tenn. in April, 1861, married Miss Priscilla Burton in May and was ordained to the ministry in June.

In September of 1861, Rev. Carter began his work among country churches and military camps in West Tennessee. Later, he carried on the same work in Rome, Georgia. When the pressures of the enemy army made it too hazardous to remain, Rev. Carter brought his family back to North Carolina.

Making his headquarters at his old home, he began again to work among the churches and military camps, holding protracted meetings with great success in Murfreesboro, Edenton, and Elizabeth City.

At the war's end, he moved to Danville, Kentucky to work in evangelism under the General Association of Kentucky. In 1868 he went to Huntsville, Alabama to pastor that church until 1870. Then, in Lauderdale, Miss., he built a home for the orphans of Confederate soldiers. From 1874 to 1877, he served as an agent for the Kentucky Theological Seminary.

After several pastorates and evangelistic meetings in Kentucky, Rev. Carter accepted a call from Wilson, N.C. in January, 1880. He remained there preaching in Wilson, Tarboro, Rocky Mount, and Toisnot until March, 1882, when he accepted a call from the Hendersonville, N.C. church. In April, 1885, Rev. Carter became sole editor and proprietor of the *Western N.C. Baptist* until it merged with the *Biblical Recorder* in 1888. Rev. Carter remained the Western editor and correspondent for the *Recorder* until just prior to his death on February 24, 1889. The *Baptist Encyclopedia* by Cathcart calls Joseph E. Carter "a zealous, gifted, and useful man."

William Packer Blake

William Packer Blake, our second pastor, was born in Martinsburg, Pennsylvania, on November 14, 1857. In March, 1875, he entered the printer's trade in Ohio and moved that same year to Singer's Glen, Virginia, to pursue his trade until 1878. The same year he was licensed to preach by Singer's Glen Church, after which Rev. Blake entered the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Upon graduation from the Seminary in 1880, he was ordained at Weldon, N.C., December 12, 1880.

Elder Blake pastored the Weldon Church from 1880-1883, and the Rocky Mount Church from 1882-1883. During 1883-1885, he worked as General Missionary to the Creek and Seminole Indians in Indian Territory.

In 1885-1887, he was pastor in Henington, Kansas. On December 1, 1887, Rev. Blake became superintendent of the Seminary Academy for Seminole Indian girls at Sasakwa, Indian Territory. He served at Emahaka Academy near Wewoka, Oklahoma, from 1894-1906, when he resigned to enter general mission work.

Rev. Blake was co-founder of the *Indian Missionary* in 1884 and co-editor until the next year. Later he was associate editor of the *Western Baptist.* He gained denominational prominence by leadership in the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Indian Territory, the Baptist General Convention of Indian Territory, and the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma as recording secretary of these bodies consecutively 1892-1918. His service in educational circles included various Indian mission schools and the founding of Oklahoma Baptist University.

William Packer Blake died at Hyattsville, Maryland, April

11, 1946, and was buried in Fort Lincoln Cemetery, Washington, D.C. According to the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists,* Vol. I, Rev. Blake "was a Baptist minister, editor, educator, missionary and denominational statesman."

Rev. J.T. Lynch

Rev. J.T. Lynch was our third pastor, but we know very little about him. The following was gleaned from our first records. He was the moderator of the church conference held February 10, 1884. A letter from the Scottsville Baptist Church was read stating that Brother J.T. Lynch was a member of that church and when he united with us would be dismissed by them.

At the church conference on September 21, 1884, Brother Lynch called Brother Thomas M. Arrington to the chair and then retired from the meeting. Brother H.D. Avera, at the request of Brother Lynch, announced to the church that the pastor had decided not to return to this field for another year, and had so notified Brother Noah Biggs, treasurer of the Tar River Association. Brother Avera also stated that Brother Lynch's poor health had prevented him from doing the pastoral work he wished to do in our midst. The members expressed their deep regret at losing Brother Lynch, as well as their love and appreciation of him as a minister of Christ.

Rev. J.A. Leslie

According to the church minutes of May 24, 1885, Rev. J.A. Leslie accepted the call to our church as extended through the Mission Board of the Tar River Association. He was to preach two sabbaths each month and receive $150 per annum

from our church and a like amount from the Mission Board.

On October 4, 1885, Rev. Leslie, our fourth pastor, moderated the church conference at which time the report to the Tar River Association was read. It included $20 to Associational Missions, $5 to Ministerial Education, and $1 to the Minute Fund.

On September 5, 1886, Rev. Leslie's salary was raised to $400, to be obtained by pledges. The pledges ranged from $.10 to $50.

At the church conference held the third Sunday in April, 1888, the church called our next pastor and requested Brother Noah Biggs to notify him of the call.

Rev. J.W. Powell and Family

On the third Sunday in June, 1888, Rev. J.W. Powell was present at services and accepted our call to this pastorate. In January, 1889, he was received into the church by letter from Clinton Baptist Church.

It is interesting to note that in the early years the church always went into conference for the reception of members; that members were excluded from the fellowship for failure to attend services or support their families and for sin and worldliness such as drinking, immorality, dancing, and card playing.

The following partial report to the Tar River Association on October 7, 1888, is enlightening:

Membership

Baptized	3	Died	2
Rec'd by letter	1	No. Males	18
Restored	None	No. Females	30
Dismissed by letter	5	Whole No.	48
Withdrawn fellowship from	1		

Contributions

Pastor's Salary	$300.00	S.S. Board	$ 2.50
Church Expenses (sexton)	45.00	S.S. Library	39.00
Improvements: (Yard		S.S. Contributions	52.00
Fence & Baptistry)	105.00	Minute Fund	1.00
Associational Missions	20.00	Total	$594.50
Baptist Orphanage	10.00		
Home Mission Board	5.00		
Foreign Mission Board	5.00	S.S. Membership	45
State Missions	5.00		
Education	5.00	No. Vol. in Library	175

Before the baptistry was built, baptisms were always conducted at the riverside of the Tar. In the above report, please note the volumes in the library.

At the conference July 7, 1889, Rev. Powell "made some timely remarks upon the conduct of those members of the

church who were wayward and indifferent and asked for the prayers of the church on their behalf."

Then romance entered the pastor's life. Miss Lillie F. Arrington, a Methodist young lady, came to play our pump organ and won the heart of Rev. Powell. Brethren J.H. Thorp, G.L. Parker, and Drew Williams were appointed a building committee to erect a suitable building for the pastor's home on December 1, 1889, and accepted the offer of Brother Powell to give $50.00 from his salary to speed the building. He hoped that this would cut down on his expenses, thus enabling him to remain in this field. On the first Sunday in May, 1890, a collection was taken up to finish paying the debt of $22.00 due on the parsonage; $13.70 was raised.

Sometime in July, 1889, Miss Arrington was received for baptism. Later she and Rev. Powell were married.

The Southern Baptist Convention annual lists Rev. Powell in Rochelle, Georgia in 1901-1902; in Kentwood, Louisiana in 1903-1904; and as having died in Georgetown, S.C. on July 27, 1904. According to the *History of the Tar River Baptist Association, 1830-1921* by Thomas J. Taylor, Rev. Powell "was a good preacher and stood well in the Tar River Association and the State."

James Franklin Love

The search for a new pastor for Rocky Mount Baptist Church began again September 23, 1890. Brother J.F. Love came highly recommended, beginning his work soon after this date. Rev. Love was born in Elizabeth City, N.C., July 14, 1859, the son of David and Amelia Love. James Love attended Wake Forest and in later life received honorary doctorates from his alma mater and Baylor University.

On August 14, 1894 at Oxford, N.C., he married Miss Caroline Gregory. Two daughters were born of this union.

Rev. Love is described as being tall, almost too tall, strong and stalwart. In spite of this, however, his life seemed destined to be full of heartaches. It began in his first pastorate at Bayboro. A dear friend, Dr. H.W. Battle, tells the following stories:

"My acquaintance with Dr. Love began when he was serving his first pastorate in N.C. I was pastor of the First Baptist Church of New Berne and had gone to assist him in a meeting of days. It was then that I discovered that which I regard as the outstanding trait of his superb manhood—I mean a type of courage which so blends the physical and moral as to work out life's highest and best results. Take him all in all, I believe J.F. Love was in this respect the bravest man I ever knew.

"Two incidents will serve to illustrate this. It was during the meeting I referred to that the bully of the neighborhood undertook to interrupt and break up our services by a very offensive disturbance in the rear of the congregation. My friend quietly left the pulpit platform and suddenly stood beside the half-drunken rowdy. I saw Love whisper something to the fellow, and the two went outside. So soon as they were out of the building, I was told, the desperado drew a knife and was about to plunge it into the body of the preacher when he found his uplifted hand caught and held as in an iron vice. Astounded that a preacher should speak in such resolute tones and be so strong, he was quickly subdued.

"Years after this, while I was pastor at Wilson and my friend at Rocky Mount, I received a telegram which read as follows: 'I am in trouble. Come. J.F. Love.' I chanced to be in a store down town when the telegram was handed to me. I

wired Love to meet me at the depot and jumped on the passing train. I found him in great agitation, and there were tears in his eyes. He hastened to say he had sent for me to ask if I thought he ought to leave the ministry, and added, 'I had rather die than to bring reproach on the gospel.' . . . I then learned that the editor of the town paper had severely criticized a statement it was said the minister had made in a speech on Prohibition. My friend went to the office of the editor to correct the misunderstanding, but the irate editor, with a local reputation for pugilistic prowess, no sooner learned who his caller was than he began a fierce physical attack. Our preacher, with the skill of other days, parried the blows, retreating from the room all the while, until his assailant stood at the head of the flight of stairs that led up to the office from Main Street. Just at this point, our preacher was caught off guard, and received a stinging blow in the face. Quicker than I can tell it, that editor was going headforemost down those steps, as if shot from a catapult, to the pavement below—to be picked up by a passing policeman. Explanations followed, the editor apologized, the two shook hands and it would seem that the incident had ended, with no disturbing recollections for either. But J.F. Love recalled the words of his Lord about that very matter of cheek-smiting, and he was miserable. It mattered little to him what men might say, what would Jesus think? . . . that was the question! He wanted me to tell him what I thought about it, and what I thought he ought to do. Loyalty to Jesus Christ was above everything else in the world to him. For a moment I gazed at this great, strong, distressed man in silent admiration, and with a feeling of relief in which affection, pride and something like amusement were mingled. But he was tremendously in earnest, and I knew if I had any exegetical ability that was the time to use it. I left him com-

forted. So far as I can recall, neither of us ever referred to the occurrence afterwards."

Though Rev. Love tried to resign from our pastorate, the congregation would not permit it, extending him a unanimous call to remain.

The next distressing incident took place when one of our prominent members joined the "Mistic Circle," a local dance club. Much heartbreak ensued for pastor and people as the church trial dragged on for five months. When the church seemed unable to make a decision, the errant member resolved the matter by requesting that his name be erased from the roll.

When Dr. Love resigned from the Rocky Mount Church on April 17, 1892, he went as assistant pastor to the First Baptist Church, Baltimore, Md. Later he served at the First Church, Suffolk, Va. His last pastorate was the First Church, Wadesboro, N.C.

After this he served as secretary of missions in Arkansas for four years; as assistant corresponding secretary of the Home Mission Board for eight years; as home secretary and, later, as executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board from May 1, 1914 to May 3, 1928.

The fourteen years of Love's service with the Foreign Mission Board, among the most difficult in the board's history, covered the period of World War I, reconstruction, inflation and depression. The 75 Million Campaign for mission funds, which promised to exceed the goal, fell short by approximately $15,000,000, burdening boards, institutions and churches with heavy debts. At one time the Foreign Mission Board, confident of meeting its obligations and sending eager volunteers to foreign fields, owed more than $1,000,000.

In the line of duty, Dr. Love traveled to our mission stations in the Orient, South America and Europe, thrilling to every

small advance being made. Besides the writings his office required, Love authored nine books. According to Dr. J.L. White who delivered the eulogy to Dr. Love at the Southern Baptist Convention on May 20, 1928, Dr. Love's greatest book was the *Mission of Our Nation.*

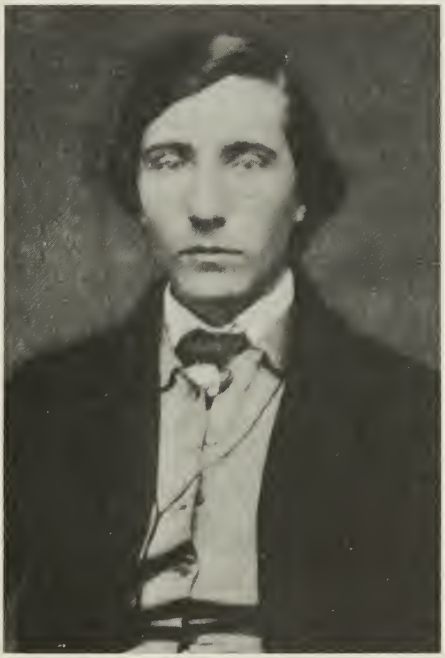
James Franklin Love suffered a slight attack while attending the Baptist World Alliance in Stockholm in 1923, but recovered and continued his work. His close friends realized he was grieving and his health was breaking under the great debt on our board. The end came May 3, 1928. This giant of a man is buried in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Va., where all the former secretaries of the Foreign Mission Board are buried.

Rev. C.W. Cooper

Rev. Charles W. Cooper supplied for two months according to the September 24, 1892 Associational report, and also preached the Thanksgiving sermon November 24, 1892. After this, he was called by the church at a salary of $75.00 a month.

In June 1893, the church had only one deacon, Brother George L. Parker. He said he needed help and asked for others to be elected. Brethren E.W. Shearin, C.E. Wilson, N.G. Worsley, and G.L.W. Pegram were elected.

The church finances were in such bad shape, Rev. Cooper and Brother Parker offered to inform the members about the crisis. This must not have been successful, for on October 15, 1893, the church was again without a pastor.



Rev. J.K. Howell

James King Howell was born in Granville County, N.C., about 1837. In 1856, he was licensed to preach by Corinth Church in Granville County. Howell graduated from Wake Forest College in 1860 and was ordained by Wake Forest Church in 1861. While a student at Wake Forest, he preached regularly to the colored members of that church.

The *Biblical Recorder* of February 11, 1863 carries the following notice: "This promising young minister, late chaplain of the 1st Regiment, N.C.T., has removed to Welborn, Florida."

The History of Lincolnton First Baptist Church, 1859-1959, has this comment: "Reverend Howell, a native of

Granville County, was a missionary appointed by the North Carolina State Mission Board for one year."

During his active ministry, Rev. Howell served various churches and fields, among which were Hickory, Selma, Smithfield, Kinston, and Yanceyville. In 1892, he came to Rocky Mount from Selma. On October 19, 1893, he was called to be our eighth pastor. His last pastorate was the North Rocky Mount Church which he served as their first pastor in 1895.

Rev. Howell lived in Rocky Mount with his daughter, Mrs. P.B. Kyser, who was distinguished for being the only woman in the State to pass the Raleigh State Board as pharmacist. Mr. Howell at one time was engaged in the lumber business and offered his assistance in organizing and building North Rocky Mount Church. The North Rocky Mount short history says that "the greater part of the lumber for the original building was donated by Rev. Howell, in addition to his supervision and construction of the church." Rev. Howell ministered at North Rocky Mount for three years, the first year without salary.

While he served us, the church had a very difficult time raising even the small salary of $40 a month. Services were being held only three times a month. On August 29, 1895, when Rev. Howell resigned, the church was still trying to raise his back salary.

Rev. Howell was married rather late in life to Miss Virginia Caroline Royster of Granville County. She is described as "a devout woman, eminently fitted to be his companion and helper."

Brother Howell was editor of "The Spirit of the Age," published in Raleigh, N.C. He also wrote a song book entitled "Sunday School Wreath" and a "Bible Catechism."

James King Howell died in 1907. The History of the Tar River Association states: "Brother Howell was eminent for his great humility, his thorough consecration and his untiring zeal."

Rev. W.V. Savage, D.D.

Dr. William Vann Savage was born April 6, 1864 at Como, N.C. He was the son of Rev. Robert Rison Savage and Rowena Vann Savage.

After graduating from Wake Forest College in 1884, he taught for several years in the public schools of Mount Airy, Raleigh and Henderson, N.C. In 1888, he married Miss Mattie W. Williams of Raleigh. They were the parents of three sons and one daughter.

While teaching school, he was also reading law with the intention of entering this field, but God called him to preach instead. In 1891, he was ordained to the ministry by Buckhorn Church, North Carolina. His first two pastorates were Columbia, N.C. and Tarboro, N.C. While at Tarboro, he was called to our church to preach two Sundays a month. He preached his first sermon for us in November, 1895.

During his period in Rocky Mount, Dr. Savage broached several matters, such as the need for ushers for the services; of renewal among the members; and the great need of some systematic way for paying our debts. (The church still owed Rev. Howell about $125 which was not paid in full until March 24, 1897!)

By conducting meetings in the afternoons for Bible reading, prayer, and explanation for believers, and at the same time leading a series of meetings, Dr. Savage endeavored to bring the church out of its spiritual slump.

His work here lasted until June 16, 1897, when he left Tarboro and Rocky Mount to accept what would be his last pastorate.

He ministered at the Churchland Baptist Church, Virginia, for 34 years. During this time, the church, built in 1884, burned down. Dr. Savage led his congregation in building "one of the most beautiful rural church houses in the country."

Dr. Savage received his doctorate from the University of Richmond. He was a trustee of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky; of the Virginia Baptist Orphanage in Salem, Va.; and of the old Woman's College of Richmond, Va.

His death came on July 28, 1931.

Dr. Martin Luther Kesler

Martin Luther Kesler was born August 25, 1858 in Iredell County, N.C. His parents were C.W. Kesler and Elizabeth Lazenby Kesler. As a boy, he had the good fortune to be reared on a farm. He attended Cool Springs School, with John Ducket as teacher. Later he went to high school at Moravian Falls for three years, where George W. Green (who later became a professor at Wake Forest, then a distinguished missionary to China) was a teacher.

At twenty-four, he entered Wake Forest College, graduating in 1888 with the A.B. degree. In 1891, he graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Master's degree.

On September 14, 1892, Rev. Kesler and Miss Ethel Browne of Aiken, S.C. were married. He had met his bride while working in the Edisto Association in Social Service. Three sons were born of this union.

When he finished at the Seminary, Rev. Kesler worked for the North Carolina Baptist State Convention as Sunday School Secretary. Later he served two pastorates, Laurinburg and Spring Hill. In 1896, he was called to the First Baptist Church in High Point, N.C. His next pastorate was the Rocky Mount Baptist Church where he preached his first pastoral sermon on September 5, 1897.

September 22, in conference, Brother George Parker suggested that "with winter approaching, we should avoid the usual annoyance of frequent calls for money to buy coal." Bro. C.W. Simmons was appointed a committee of one to raise the necessary funds for the coming winter.

The pastor made timely remarks on "System in Giving" and suggested that in the beginning of the church year we should carefully consider and decide what amount we would give to each cause. (This was long before the Cooperative Program was in effect.) On October 24, a committee was appointed

and $193 was subscribed toward building a parsonage. On December 19, the pastor urged the necessity of insuring the church and the parsonage, now nearing completion.

At the January 9, 1898 conference, it was discovered that we had only one living trustee, Brother George Parker. C.W. Simmons and E.W. Shearin were elected to serve with him. Later that month the Roanoke Union met with our church with Rev. Kesler as moderator.

The following February the church treasurer reported "considerable indebtedness on account of Pastor's salary." The pastor again emphasized the urgent necessity for system in giving and collecting the money needed for our work. At almost every conference this subject was discussed. Finally, on October 12, 1898, a Finance Committee was appointed. At this time, it was also decided to have church services every Sunday and to accept whatever help available from the state and associational boards.

On March 29, 1899 Brother W.W. Avera was elected Librarian. The need for more deacons was mentioned by the pastor and it was decided to elect two more. Also that the deacons of the church should "constitute the spiritual committee of the church." Following the church's action to summon a male member before the church "to show cause why he shouldn't be excluded for unchristian conduct," Rev. Kesler eloquently "urged upon the membership our one great duty . . . . to work for the conversion of men and women to God, showing that all of our church activities are utterly worthless whenever we fall short of the Heaven-born purpose of bringing souls to Christ and praying for a membership pure and above reproach."

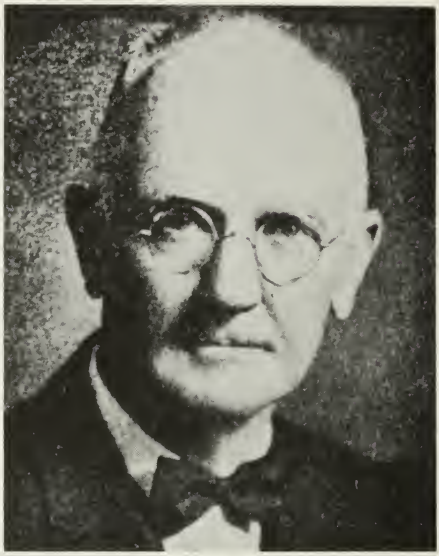
The June 4, 1899 Treasurer's report "showed church finances to be in most encouraging condition." July 5, 1899 the

records show "the town had agreed to grant a street from Church Street to Franklin Street just north of our parsonage." At this same time, a "Home Department" was added to the Sunday School with Brother T.M. Arrington superintendent.

On December 2, 1899 the pastor's salary was raised to $600, to be paid by the church, with $100 each to be paid by the State Board and the Associational Board, making a total of $800 for the ensuing year. In August of 1900, Rev. Kesler announced his intention of accepting the call of Scotland Neck Church, his resignation effective in September. The minutes of that conference state "he leaves a church that has grown stronger in every way during his pastorate of three years, and a people that greatly love him."

From Scotland Neck, Dr. Kesler went to Morganton (his last church). On September 1, 1905 he became General Manager of the Baptist Orphanage and gave twenty-seven years to this crowning work of his life.

In 1916 Wake Forest conferred the Doctor of Divinity degree upon him. His other honors are too numerous to mention here, but the following words are said to describe him: "Good, safe, sensible, conservative, prudent, practical, direct, and has common sense." His death occurred August 20, 1932 at Thomasville, N.C. as the result of a collision between an automobile and a freight train.



Rev. Walter N. Johnson

The oldest of eleven children, red-headed Walter Nathan Johnson was born March 24, 1875 at Delway, Sampson County. His parents were Calhoun Cornelius Johnson and Laura Ann (Alderman) Johnson.

He was prepared for college at Wakefield and graduated from Wake Forest in 1899 with an A.B. degree. He studied at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1905 and at the University of Chicago in 1911.

Rev. Johnson was ordained to the ministry in 1896 and held several pastorates in this state through the years: Roanoke Rapids, Weldon, Johnson's Church at Warsaw, Rocky Mount Church, Wake Forest, Baden and King's Mountain. He served two brief pastorates in Louisiana at Natchitoches and Alexandria, and was Secretary of Missions in that state for two years, 1907-1909.

Miss Eva Coppedge and Mr. Johnson were married in Vance County on August 15, 1900. She was the daughter of Rev. G.W. Coppedge.

Rev. Walter N. Johnson came to the Rocky Mount Baptist Church, with his bride, from Weldon, N.C. on October 21, 1900. Financial problems were still plaguing the congregation. Being led by outstanding men, the Sunday School Institute held November 16-18, 1900 seemed to be a great success.

The January 16, 1901 conference minutes make this statement: "Received by letter from the Baptist Church of Weldon, N.C., Rev. W.N. Johnson and by letter from the Baptist Church of Wakefield, N.C., Mrs. W.N. Johnson into full fellowship of this church. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were recently married is why they come to us from different churches."

On February 27, 1901 the Pastor presented an outline of the order of business to be followed hereafter in church conferences. The April 28, 1901 minutes state "Our pastor had been trying for some time to work up some interest in a church paper. He finally succeeded in getting out the first issue of some 300 copies April 19. The name of the paper is 'Our Church' and is published weekly."

In May, plans were presented for enlarging the church. There was to be an annex with a movable partition for the growing Sunday School, the cost not to exceed $500. Also, recommendations were made to the trustees "to secure property in Edgecombe County, near South Rocky Mount, on which to erect a Baptist Church; or to purchase the public school property near South Rocky Mount." (For some time our church had operated a mission Sunday School in the school building. The mission became Arlington Street Baptist Church.)

The August 28, 1901 minutes state: "Brother Johnson then resigned as pastor of this church, his resignation to take effect at once." No reason is given.

After his Alexandria pastorate, Rev. Johnson came to Wake Forest, where he remained from 1909-1915. He led Wake Forest Church in building their elegant "House of Worship." He served as Secretary of Missions for the Baptist State Convention, 1916-1920, during the famous Seventy-Five Million Campaign. In 1919, Wake Forest conferred an honorary doctorate upon him.

During his later years, he was well known as a writer, editor, and speaker on stewardship, his forte. He was Secretary of the Steward League of Baptist Ministers and Editor of *The Next Step in Churches,* a bulletin of the Steward League, for nearly 25 years, from the 1920's until 1945.

He was author of *The Southern Baptist Crisis,* 1905; *Stewardship Vitalized,* 1926; *Which? Dominate or Permeate,* 1929; *Spinal Readjustment in Southern Baptist Life,* 1931; and *The Release of Power in Churches Vitalized to Save Our Modern World,* 1946.

At the age of 77, Dr. Walter Nathan Johnson passed away in Raleigh on June 24, 1952. He had been in declining health for many months. He was called a "saint" and a "religious mystic." Dr. Edwin McNeill Poteat eulogized him as "an authentic saint."

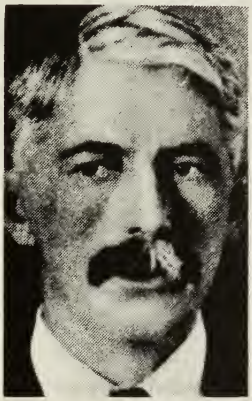
"For the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Nehemiah 8:10

CHAPTER III

WE REMEMBER OUR LATER PASTORS

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" I Cor. 9:16.



Braxton Craig

Braxton Craig was born in Bertie County, N.C. on October 8, 1863. His parents were Andrew M. Craig and Clara R. Gillam Craig. His Scottish father died in Craig's early childhood, but his mother was capable and noble. She brought her children up well, Braxton becoming a minister and his brother, Locke Craig, serving the State of North Carolina as governor for four years.

Mr. Craig entered the University of North Carolina in 1880, where he studied about three and a half years.

On December 9, 1886, Braxton Craig and Miss Helen G. Wilson, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. T.J. Wilson, Sr., were married at Chapel Hill, N.C. They had nine children.

Mr. Craig was ordained to the gospel ministry in Windsor, N.C. on November 16, 1889. His first pastorate was at Ahoskie, where he served for six years. He was in West Norfolk, Virginia for three years, then returned to North Carolina to pastor the Tarboro church for three years. During his pastorates at Ahoskie, Tarboro and Rocky Mount, this section of the state was in an agricultural depression because of too much rain and poor crops in 1889. Beginning with 1893, for several years cotton was selling for 4 and 5 cents a pound. This seriously hampered Christian work.

From Tarboro, dark-haired Mr. Craig came to our church on November 1, 1901. His salary was $700 and the parsonage was free. On the 5th Sunday in January 1902, the Quarterly Conference reports "The Board of Deacons recommend that electric lights be placed in church as soon as sufficient funds can be assured. Recommendations adopted. In discussion of same, Brother George L. Parker proposed to present to the church a Communion Service in the name of his wife and himself if the church will put in the electric lights."

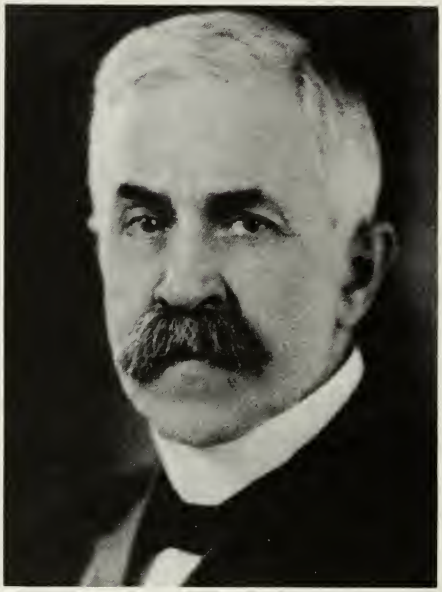
July 30, 1902 minutes state that $15 had been forwarded to Mr. Noah Biggs to help build a church in Martin County. Meanwhile, many people were joining our church. While the church was still struggling with finances, on September 4, 1904 the church voted to assume the full payment of the pastor's salary and no longer receive help from the Mission Board.

Most of the minutes deal with members who are coming by letter, for baptism, moving to another church or having church fellowship withdrawn from them. Some repairs were made to the parsonage, some chairs purchased for the church, and in April 1905 plans were inaugurated to celebrate the church's 25th anniversary in June, 1905.

January 6, 1907 Braxton Craig submitted his resignation in order to become State Evangelist with the N.C. Mission Board. Our minutes state that "with much regret and broken hearts his resignation was accepted."

After serving as state evangelist for two years, he pastored churches at Mount Olive and Monroe. During the Judson Centennial Movement, he spent nearly three years with the Foreign Mission Board of North Carolina. When this work was finished, he preached at Timmonsville, South Carolina and Farmville, N.C.

Braxton Craig died of heart trouble February 28, 1928 at the Ellen Fitzgerald Hospital in Monroe, N.C. The *Biblical Recorder* of March 7, 1928 remarks: "He was pastor for most of his life, and never sought prominent fields or large salaries. He was satisfied to go wherever he felt the Lord needed him, and the question of salary never influenced his decisions."



Isaac M. Mercer, D.D.

Isaac M. Mercer was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1858. He was graduated from Richmond College with a M.A. degree in 1878 and received the D.D. degree from the same institution in 1896. He was also a graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In 1880 he was licensed to preach. In 1883 he was ordained by the Second Church, Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Mercer held the following pastorates in Virginia: South Boston; Black Walnut; Bethcar; First Church, Alexandria; and Tabernacle Church, Richmond. In South Carolina, he was pastor at Pendleton Street Church, Greenville. In North Carolina, he was pastor at Washington Church about two years, then came to Rocky Mount First. According to the church minutes,

following Rev. Braxton Craig's resignation, Brother I.M. Mercer of Washington was called to pastor this church, to take charge March 1, 1907 at $1000 and a home.

On June 9, 1907 a series of meetings began with Brother Lumpkin of Scotland Neck preaching, resulting in twenty-two conversions.

At the church conference July 3, 1907, it was decided to discontinue the quarterly meeting on the first Sunday and hold communion service instead. Also, that the regular monthly business meetings be held on Wednesday night before the first Sunday. It was voted that Dr. Mercer name five brethren to meet with the deacons to discuss the matter of building and appointing the different committees. At this same conference, Dr. Mercer retired and the members voted to raise his salary to $100 a month.

Dr. Mercer led in raising money, planning our present sanctuary and a parsonage, working without stint, while at the same time leading the missions which became Arlington Street Church and Calvary Church to constitute and build. When Calvary was built, it was debt-free. The members of Calvary wanted to name their church for Dr. Mercer, but he would not permit it. Instead, he named it Calvary. Dr. Mercer had made a staunch friend of Rev. M.B. Williford, a Primitive Baptist preacher, who owned most of the land in that vicinity. When Dr. Mercer thought the time ripe to build, Rev. Williford generously gave the land upon which to build a Missionary Baptist Church. Some of the members of our church who worked in the missions were Rev. Braxton Craig, Mrs. W.A. Bulluck, T.C. Rowland, E.H. Shearin, Mrs. Belle Holcombe, George L. Parker, Sr., and C.E. Clemmons.

On December 13, 1914 Dr. Mercer reported the organization of two missions at Pleasant Hill and Dixie. The church

accepted these schools under its care and supervision and authorized the "General Committee" to assist in this work. The February 14, 1915 conference mentions that money was raised for a floral design for Mr. Noah Biggs, long-time friend of the church and prominent leader in the Tar River Association. In the same minutes, Mr. Clarence Griffin is mentioned as head usher with four helpers.

Dr. Mercer was a big man with heavy black hair and black beard. Mission work and Bible study were his special forte, to which he gave great emphasis. To oversee the building of three churches at the same time must have taken great stamina and knowledge. One wonders if the death of his son Broaddus had anything to do with his wanting to name one new mission "Calvary." Broaddus was drowned at Flat Rock, close to the Nashville Railroad, while trying to rescue another.

After eight years and four months with our church, Dr. Mercer tendered his resignation on June 27, 1915.

In Thomasville, N.C. he pastored the First Church and the Orphanage Church for about four years, then went to the First Church in Wilson. This was his last pastorate. The rest of his pre-retirement was served as associate professor of religion at Meredith College.

Dr. Isaac M. Mercer died February 23, 1941 at age 83 at his home in Raleigh. Funeral services were held at Pullen Memorial Church February 25. Dr. Mercer had been ill for five months, the illness terminating in pneumonia.

An excerpt from *A History of the Tar River Baptist Association 1830-1921* by T.J. Taylor states, "Dr. Mercer is an able preacher, a safe leader, wise in counsel, and one of the best loved preachers among us."

Livingston Johnson

Livingston Johnson was born in Scotland County, North Carolina on November 7, 1857. He was the son of Duncan Johnson and Catherine White Johnson.

Mr. Johnson went to Wake Forest College which conferred the Doctor of Divinity degree upon him in 1913. He was a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1887-1888.

On October 18, 1882 he was married to Mary Frances Memory, daughter of Thomas and Rachel Memory, at Whiteville, N.C. They had one son and three daughters, one of whom (Foy Johnson Farmer) became a beloved leader in WMU in this state.

Dr. Johnson was ordained by Spring Hill Church in Scotland County in 1888. He served pastorates in Rockingham,

1888-1895; Lumberton, January to October, 1895; First Church, Greensboro, 1895-1900. From 1900-1915, he was Corresponding Secretary of the Baptist State Convention. His last pastorate was at Rocky Mount First Church, 1915-1917.

The August 29, 1915 minutes state that Dr. Livingston Johnson was called to our church at a yearly salary of $2000. On March 26, 1916, Dr. Johnson named a committee for "organizing the church work."

On May 10, 1916, T.A. Avera "stated to the meeting that a music committee had been organized among the young men of the church and that they had agreed to guarantee a class of fifteen pupils for Mrs. Edmonds if the church would assume, and include in the budget system, the $30 per month for 9 months which they were now paying."

On November 19, 1916 among the newly elected church leaders were: Miss Ada Shearin, organist; S.N. Edwards, custodian; W.R. Lancaster, assistant custodian; T.A. Avera, superintendent of Sunday School; and J.A. Harper, president of B.Y.P.U.

On February 11, 1917 the church voted to appoint Miss Richardson and Mr. and Mrs. E.T. Joyner to take charge of the Junior B.Y.P.U. work. Also, that the church would raise 2/5 of the amount raised for missions for education.

Dr. and Mrs. Johnson gave strong added impetus to the work of missions, and Mrs. Johnson helped to get the missionary society into smaller, more workable units called circles.

On July 22, 1917 Dr. Johnson resigned from our pastorate to become editor of the *Biblical Recorder*, a position he held until his death on February 8, 1931 in Raleigh, N.C.

Dr. Johnson was trustee of Wake Forest and Meredith Colleges and of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was Vice President of the Southern Baptist Convention and a

member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. He authored two books: *History of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina* (1908) and *Christian Statesmanship* (1913).

John William Kincheloe

John William Kincheloe was born December 6, 1871 in Fairfax County, Virginia. His parents, William Simpson Kincheloe and Annie Maria Suddath Kincheloe, were natives of Fairfax County.

Kincheloe went to public school in Fairfax County, attended Wood's Commercial College in Washington, D.C., and later the Columbia Academy of Washington. He received the B.A. degree from Richmond College in 1903. Young Kincheloe knew he was not adequately prepared for college

work, but his earnestness persuaded the officials to give him a chance anyway. To graduate with his class, he had to accomplish the equivalent of eight years work, including Latin and Greek, in four years. At the same time, he was serving a full-time pastorate at Stockton Street Baptist Church in Richmond.

John W. Kincheloe was born on the family farm, part of an original land grant from the King of England. At fifteen, he was managing the farm for his father, who married late in life. John was nearly 24 before his next brother was old enough to replace him. When he left the farm, he went to Washington, D.C. and became a conductor with the Capital Traction Company, an old cable line between the navy yard and Georgetown. He worked with this railroad for twenty-two months, then began his preparation for the ministry.

Rev. Kincheloe was ordained at the Second Baptist Church, Washington, on September 30, 1896. His pastorates were Columbia Baptist Church, Falls Church, Virginia; Stockton Street and Clopton Street Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia; Crew Baptist Church, Crewe, Virginia; Princeton Baptist Church, Princeton, West Virginia; and Bainbridge Street Church, Richmond, Virginia.

On October 18, 1905 John William Kincheloe and Miss Florence Jane Henderson of Washington, D.C. were married. She was the daughter of William A. Henderson and Rebecca Tyler Henderson. To this union four sons were born: John William, Jr.; Henderson Grady; Hatcher Byrd; and Garland Broaddus Kincheloe.

In September 1917, Mr. Kincheloe resigned from Bainbridge Street Church to accept the call of the First Baptist Church of Rocky Mount, N.C. America was entering the first World War. It was not an auspicious time to begin a new work.

However, the church was debt-free with nearly 450 members. The new sanctuary was only five years old, though not yet fully completed. During his ministry, the church was finished, a Sunday School Annex constructed, a recreation building completed, the Chapel built, a new parsonage purchased, and the sanctuary air conditioned. All was done on a pay-as-you-go basis.

On May 11, 1919 Mr. Kincheloe and Mr. T.A. Avera presented to the church both oral and written statements regarding the church's position on the Federated Council of Churches. The church declined to become a member.

It is estimated that 4000 people joined our church during Dr. Kincheloe's long pastorate. Our first assistant pastor was added to the staff in 1939. Under Dr. Kincheloe's aegis, a Brotherhood was begun in 1952.

John W. Kincheloe was a man of many interests. While yet a teenager he had taught school for a year. He was a farmer, railroad man, minister of the gospel, hunter, fisherman, and bee-keeper. From childhood, he had "a mania for bees." When his sons were old enough, he taught them the art of bee-keeping. They formed a company and sold honey, thus helping themselves through school. In some way, Dr. Kincheloe used all his varied interests for God's glory. His love of hunting and fishing meant not only recreation but a means to win men to the Lord. The church gave the pastor vacations, but he preferred a day off now and again to commune with nature, hunt birds or deer, or fish. And his sermons were full of wisdom and examples taken from the bees, birds, deer, and nature in general.

Mr. Kincheloe was a lover of people—not just Baptist people—all people. Almost daily he could be seen on Main Street making the rounds of the business district, speaking to clerks,

customers, and pedestrians. Or he visited the Railroad Shops and conducted brief services during the lunch hour. On summer Sundays after dinner, he frequently led several cars of young people to a prison camp to sing and help in the services. He was an inveterate visitor in members' homes and in the hospitals.

Dr. Kincheloe rarely concerned himself with finances, but the church remained free of debt and built up a reserve for future expansion. However, in 1931 during the depression, Dr. Kincheloe requested that his salary be reduced by $300. The deacons granted his request.

On June 5, 1928 the University of Richmond conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity upon J.W. Kincheloe. He served on the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention; on the Board of Directors of the *Biblical Recorder*; as Vice President of the N.C. Baptist Convention; and on the N.C. Baptist Board. Dr. Kincheloe had the unique distinction of holding the pastorate here for nearly 36 years.

On his 25th anniversary as pastor, the church presented him with a leather-bound book of the church's early history and his own pastorate. When he retired in 1953, the church elected him Pastor Emeritus. The Chapel was named in his honor five years after his retirement. He was 87. At the same time, a bronze bust, created by a local artist, Mr. Frank Thigpen, was unveiled in the vestibule of the Chapel.

Mrs. Kincheloe had passed on four years earlier. After several years of failing health, Dr. Kincheloe joined her on March 12, 1966 at the ripe old age of 94.

Douglas M. Branch

Douglas McKinley Branch was born November 8, 1908. He was reared on a farm in the Mount Moriah Community of Wake County and attended school at Mt. Auburn and Garner. On June 2, 1933 he married Miss Jessie Averitte Walker, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jessie Walker of Windsor. They had three children: Minnie Frances, Jessica, and Douglas, Jr.

Entering Wake Forest College in the spring of 1934, he graduated cum laude in the summer school of 1937. He was ordained to the ministry in October 1935 in the Mt. Moriah Church, Wake County. During his college days he served rural and village churches, mainly in Wake and Franklin Counties. These churches included Youngsville, Bethlehem near Raleigh, and Bethany. In 1938, he accepted a call to Cary, his first full-time pastorate.

In 1941, he became associated with the State Mission Board as a general missionary, the forerunner of the post of State Missions Secretary. In 1943, he moved to Louisville, Kentucky where he entered the Southern Seminary. He was a student here until August, 1945, when he accepted a call to the First Church, Scotland Neck. In November 1947, he went to the First Church, Kannapolis until March, 1953. At that time, he came to his last pastorate, First Church, Rocky Mount.

Doug Branch brought far-reaching, constructive and innovative ideas to our church. He began a Junior Church in the Chapel during the Sunday School hour. (The children had Sunday School during the eleven o'clock worship service.) Because all the congregation couldn't be seated in the sanctuary at one time, he preached twice—at 8:30 and at 11:00 A.M. Many people preferred the earlier service.

In the fall of 1954, James Batten was appointed chairman of a Kindergarten committee, and Mrs. R.E. Lee and Mrs. C.D. Braswell organized our first kindergarten with thirty children enrolled. Classes were conducted in the old Kincheloe parsonage.

As early as 1945, there was interest in rotating deacons as shown by the minutes of November 12, 1945. However, the committee reported on February 11, 1946 "they didn't recommend any change."

When the North Rocky Mount Baptist Church split and the divided fellowship took recourse in litigation for possession of the church property, our church was shocked into the realization that we needed a constitution! When it was written, it contained two articles which were of very particular interest. According to the constitution, all deacons "members of the present board who by December 31, 1957 will have served for a period of twenty-five (25) years or by such date will have

reached the age of seventy (70) years, shall remain a member of the active board of deacons until death or resignation." All other deacons drew lots determining their years of service before rotation. No deacon rotated could succeed himself until the expiration of at least one year. This was in 1955. The other article was as follows: "Article III Membership. Section 1. The membership of this church shall be composed of white persons who have given evidence of regeneration, who have been baptized by immersion, who have subscribed to the convenant and constitution of this church, and who have been received by vote of the church."

In 1954, Youth Week was started, giving the young people actual knowledge through participation in the operation of the church.

Lakeside Baptist Church was constituted in the First Baptist Church sanctuary on June 5, 1955, with 252 charter members drawn from our roll. Though we have mothered many churches in this area, this was the largest single migration. Dr. J.W. Kincheloe was called as interim pastor.

On the second Sunday in March 1955, Sunday School attendance reached 1012 and Training Union reached 207.

Bevenue Baptist Church was constituted with our help on September 11, 1955, with 64 charter members.

On September 24, 1958 there was a hearing in the Recorder's Courtroom regarding the Ivy Room (a restaurant across the street from the church on the corner of Church Street and Western Avenue) selling beer. The pastor led the church in vigorously opposing this action, going in a group to the courtroom. The Ivy Room was not given a license to sell beer.

Dr. Branch was concerned about separation of Church and State (POAU) and the American Bible Society. He instituted

the Forward Program of Church Finance, begun in 1958, and led the church to set aside 20% of the church collection for the Cooperative Program. His interest in Christian Education led him to work for a Baptist College in Rocky Mount, but this did not materialize. His dream was partially fulfilled when plans were made to raze the scout hut and the old parsonage in order to build a new educational building. These plans called for space for a kindergarten and day care center.

Consultants were called in to help plan for the best use of the existing facilities so that age grading for Sunday School classes could be extended to the adults.

Family night suppers were instituted, with supper, prayer meeting, and church organizational meetings taking place on Wednesday night.

In May 1959, Dr. Branch was elected, at a special session of the Baptist State Convention, to be general secretary and treasurer of the N.C. Convention. Our church was in the midst of building the new educational facility. This made a difficult decision necessary for our pastor. He made the decision to accept the new challenge and resigned this pastorate.

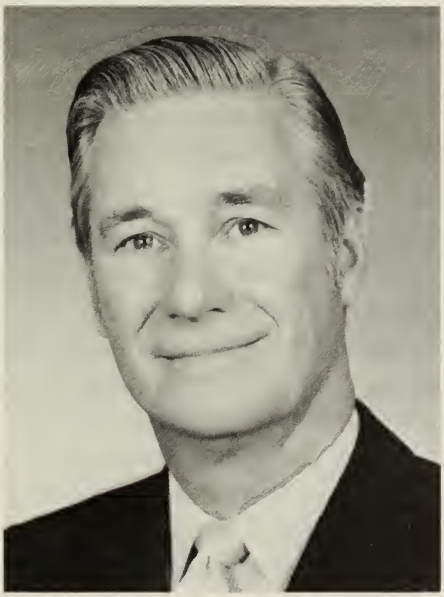
On February 1, 1963 Dr. Branch addressed the Chowan College convocation, lunched with his daughter, Mrs. Ben Sutton, and was on his way to hunt wild turkeys with friends in Martin County. Near Ahoskie he crashed head-on into a stalled truck. He was dead on arrival at Roanoke-Chowan Hospital in Ahoskie.

In 1952, Doug Branch had been elected first vice president of the N.C. Convention. In 1953, Dr. Archie Ellis, president, moved to Columbia, S.C., and Dr. Branch automatically became president. He was re-elected in 1953 and 1954. In 1956, Wake Forest College conferred the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree upon him. He served as a trustee of Wake

Forest and Wingate Colleges and held numerous committee appointments, such as: member of the committee of 19 which drew up the Nine Year Program of Advance in 1951; member of the S.B.C. Executive Committee for several years and chairman of the Special S.B.C. Survey Committee, 1957-1959.

Dr. Branch's funeral was held in Forest Hills Church, Raleigh, February 3, 1963, after lying in state at the Baptist Building in that city.

Perhaps, of the thousands of words of praise written about him, the following are the most descriptive: by Mr. Starnes, "He never lost his human touch"; by Mr. Trammel, "There was no pretense about his life, no veneer."



Lowell F. Sodeman

Lowell Sodeman was born in Platte County, Missouri on February 6, 1914. His parents were active in the Baptist Church where his father was a deacon. His father was also a County Judge.

Mr. Sodeman attended school in Liberty, Missouri and took some of his college work at William Jewell College. He graduated from high school as an honor student, then came to Wake Forest College, N.C., to get his Bachelor of Science degree in 1939.

While a student at Wake Forest, Rev. Sodeman pastored three churches in this state: Trinity Baptist Church near Benson, Wilson Mills Baptist Church near Smithfield, and Mount Moriah Baptist Church near Raleigh.

In June, 1940, Lowell F. Sodeman married a Meredith College graduate, Miss Mary Elizabeth Ferguson, of Durham, N.C. They had four children: Betty, Susan, Ann, and Lowell 2nd.

In 1941-1942, Rev. Sodeman pastored Edgemont Baptist Church in Durham and did some work at the Duke Divinity School. During his seminary days at Louisville, Kentucky, Rev. Sodeman served at the Shepherdsville Baptist Church at Shepherdsville, Kentucky (1943-1945).

During the Second World War in 1945, he was commissioned 1st Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Chaplaincy. He attained the rank of Captain while serving in the Phillipines, Japan, China, Iwo Jima, and mainland U.S.A.

The First Baptist Church of Clinton, N.C. called him in 1946. In 1951, he went to Mars Hill Baptist Church, Mars Hill, N.C., where he led in a building program for a new church and parsonage. Leaving this state in 1954, he pastored the St. Matthews Church in South Carolina, where he again led in a building program.

While in North Carolina, he served on the Board of Directors for the *Biblical Recorder* and on the State Committee of 21 and the Committee of 19, in preparation for the Nine Year Program for North Carolina Baptists.

In August 1956, Mr. Sodeman went to Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, Kentucky. Three years later, in October 1959, he began his pastorate with First Baptist Church, Rocky Mount, N.C.

During his years with us, the new educational building, under construction when Dr. Branch resigned, was completed. Besides being a good preacher, we discovered that Rev. Sodeman had a hidden talent! He was very adept at playing the musical saw and sometimes could be persuaded to give a brief concert. An unusual and tragic event took place which cast a long-lasting pall of sorrow upon the whole fellowship. Brother E.F. Duke, while making a report to the deacons' meeting, fell dead. This was a traumatic experience for our deacons and our pastor.

On December 3, 1963, Rev. Sodeman left our church to serve in the Baptist Hospital at Winston-Salem, N.C. as Chaplain and Associate to Dr. W.K. McGee in the Department of Denominational Relations.

Presently (1976) Rev. Sodeman is working with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board as Associate Director of the Industrial Chaplaincy.

Russell T. Cherry

Russell T. Cherry was born February 2, 1927 in Virginia. He was reared in a Baptist home at Portsmouth, where his parents were active in Baptist work.

Graduating from Portsmouth Public Schools in 1944, he entered the University of Richmond and received his B.A. degree in 1947. He earned the Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1950 and the Doctor of Theology degree in 1954—both from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky. He was ordained to the ministry in South Street Baptist Church at Portsmouth in December, 1947.

Churches served by Dr. Cherry were Kent, Indiana (1948-1951); Duckers, Kentucky (1951-1952); Bainbridge Street Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia (1954-1959); and

West Lynchburg Baptist Church from August 1959 until November 1, 1964.

Dr. and Mrs. Cherry have three children: Jeannie Beth, Judy Lynne, and Russell T., III. Mrs. Cherry is from Tennessee and attended the Cookeville public schools. She earned the B.A. degree from Tennessee College for Women and a Master's degree in Religious Education from the Carver School of Missions and Social Work at Louisville. She was educational director in the Tarrant City Baptist Church at Birmingham, Alabama for one year.

Dr. Cherry served: on the Virginia Baptist General Board; as chairman of the program committee for the Baptist General Association of Virginia; and chairman of the Eagle Eyrie (summer assembly) committee. He was vice moderator of the Strawberry Baptist Association; chairman of the Missions Committee; State Board representative from the association; and president of the Lynchburg Baptist Pastors Conference.

During the third quarter of 1957, Dr. Cherry wrote the Sunday School lessons for the Young People's quarterly, and in the third quarter of 1960, he wrote the lessons for the Young Adult quarterly. He has also written articles for the Virginia Baptist state paper, *Religious Herald.*

Russell T. Cherry began his pastorate in our church November 1, 1964. A spirit of disunity which had existed prior to his coming hindered the work of the new pastor. In an effort to overcome friction and unite the fellowship, the pastor set about visiting every church family . . . . street by street.

A special Sunday School class for retarded children was begun "to train the child spiritually and permit the parents to attend church." Five families were involved.

Dr. Cherry's strong emphasis being teaching the people, he conducted many study classes on the Bible and related sub-

jects. He gave unstintedly of himself in this effort.

A beloved retired Baptist minister and active member of our church, Rev. G.N. Cowan, wrote his autobiography, *These 93 Years.* The deacons voted to purchase copies to be placed in Southeastern Seminary, the Louisville Seminary, and the North Carolina Baptist Convention. One was placed in our church library.

Due to vandalism, our sanctuary doors were locked when not in use. There had been a rash of thefts, abuse, and wrongful use which made this necessary. In 1964, while the sanctuary was being renovated, the fellowship met in the Center Theater for worship services.

In 1965, there were 356 members who made no monetary contributions to the work of the church. In order to make a more equitable distribution between the funds kept at home and those sent around the world, Dr. Cherry attempted to gradually raise the amount given to the Co-operative Program.

According to a study of the church made by a college student from Ahoskie, Calvin Parker, the resident members of our church in 1960 numbered 1684. In 1969, the number had declined to 1350. The net loss in membership peaked in 1961 with a loss of 80. The net gain in members peaked in 1966 with a gain of 24. Baptisms declined from 36 in 1967 to 10 in 1968.

In 1967, the fellowship was involved in the celebration of the city's Centennial. Long dresses, sun bonnets, string ties, and bearded faces were the order of the day. The Wednesday night service was canceled and all adjourned to the Rocky Mount ball park to participate in the Religious Heritage service.

A special committee was appointed in 1968 to study the church constitution and make recommendations. In part it

said: "The committee's study reveals a lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of the members of First Baptist Church in the purpose, content and use of the Constitution."

On May 13, 1968 Dr. Cherry stated to the deacons "that he was somewhat worried about our church. That he was afraid that some of our members are not enthusiastic over the purchase of property and/or an expansion program. He reminded that we must be together and not divided on such an endeavor. He stated great concern about the lack of enthusiasm on the part of our people about anything. He mentioned the net loss in members since January 1, 1968. Prayer and support were requested by Dr. Cherry on the part of every deacon, and he suggested that each of us try very hard to rekindle the 'fire' under our people."

In 1969, Mr. C. Robert Shields was recognized at the April 16th church conference for having received the Layman of the Year Award. Charles Jones was recognized for having been elected Vice President of the State Royal Ambassadors.

In the church conference of January 19, 1969, the following proposed amendment to the church constitution was made: "That Section I of Article 3 be deleted from the present Constitution and a new Section I, Article 3 be inserted, reading as follows: The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have given evidence of regeneration, who have been baptized by immersion, who have subscribed to the covenant and constitution of this church, and who have been received by the vote of the church." The vote showed 303 for, 91 against. This change in the constitution was a landmark decision allowing non-whites to become members.

For a number of years before Dr. Cherry's coming, there had been continual discussion about the feasibility of building a new sanctuary, but no firm decision had been made. On June

8, 1969, the church met in Special Called Conference in the Senior High School Auditorium; the purpose: to hear the report of the Planning and Survey Committee regarding building a new sanctuary. Result of the vote: for, 396
against, 30
no vote, 7
split, 2
commitments, 352
no comment, 22

Later, this decision was cancelled and it was decided to put off building the sanctuary and construct the Fellowship Hall first.

In June 1970, Dr. Cherry conducted a tour to the Holy Land and attended the Baptist World Alliance in Tokyo, Japan, July 12-17, 1970. Besides the Cherry family, six other members of our church took the tour and were delegates to the Baptist World Alliance.

The February 19, 1970 issue of the "Outreach" carries the resignation of Dr. Cherry. His resignation was effective April 15, 1970, when Russell T. Cherry, Jr. accepted the call of the First Baptist Church of Lumberton, N.C.

Ronald W. Higdon

Ronald W. Higdon was born July 31, 1935 at Louisville, Kentucky.

He graduated from Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky with a B.A. degree, summa cum laude, in 1957. A member of the Biology, French, and English honor societies, he was listed in Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.

Mr. Higdon taught English and Biology in high school, and later taught in the Biology Departments of Georgetown College and Kentucky Southern College in Louisville.

Rev. Higdon's early pastorates were Old Cedar Baptist Church, Owen County, Kentucky; Vine Run Baptist Church, Grant County, Kentucky; and Pine Street Baptist Church,

Virginia, 1965-1970. He was Minister of Music and Youth for one year at Virginia Avenue Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky.

Ronald Higdon is married to the former Patricia Downard of Louisville, Kentucky. She graduated from Georgetown College with a B.A. degree in Elementary Education. The Higdons have two sons, Mark and Michael.

During the first quarter of 1969, Rev. Higdon wrote for *Open Windows,* the Baptist Daily Devotional Book. In 1968, he wrote the Sunday School Lessons in *Religious Herald* for one quarter.

While in Virginia, Mr. Higdon served in the following capacities: on the staff of Eagle Eyrie (Virginia Baptist Assembly); as Secretary of Richmond Baptist Ministers Conference, 1967; as President of Oregon Hill Neighborhood Council, 1969; as member of Baptist Centers Committee, 1967-1969; as member of the Program Committee for the Baptist General Association of Virginia; as Pastor-Advisor for Virginia Baptist Men's Convention; as Pastor-Advisor for BSU of Virginia Commonwealth University; on the Executive Committee, Richmond Baptist Association; and as Chairman of Association Meetings Committee, Richmond Baptist Association.

On leaving Pine Street Baptist Church, Ronald Higdon began his work with the Rocky Mount First Baptist Church on September 15, 1970. Mr. Higdon not only preached, but had a fine singing voice which he sometimes used on special occasions.

Since our constitution had previously been changed to permit non-whites to join our fellowship, in January 1971 the first non-white, Mrs. Lucille Mae Anthony, presented herself for membership and was accepted. As far as is known, this is

the first time, from its inception, that this church has had a non-white member, though it had been commonplace among some churches.

During Mr. Higdon's pastorate with us, the new Fellowship Hall was nearly completed; the remaining debt on the new educational building was paid in February, 1973; preparations were begun for the observance of our Centennial with the appointment of a Special Historical Committee, charged with the task of researching and writing the Church history; a book store, selling books at a reduced price, was started in the church office (a seeming lack of interest finally phased this out); the Mayo Silent Bible Class celebrated its 28th anniversary on November 18, 1973; under the leadership of the associate pastor, Rev. Harry Griffin, strong emphasis was on continuing education and supportive interest in the elderly; a new pastor's study was constructed on the second floor of the new education building; and Rev. J.R. Everette, retired minister, was added to the church staff as Minister of Visitation.

Unfortunately, young Mark Higdon was accidentally burned while playing, causing the great concern of his parents and the fellowship. He made a good recovery.

With the consent of the church, Mr. Higdon used vacation and convention time to attend classes at Southeastern Seminary at Wake Forest, N.C. and take a ten-day study tour of Israel in February, 1974. This was part of his work toward the Doctor of Ministries degree.

July 21, 1974 Dr. Ronald W. Higdon resigned our pastorate to accept the call of the First Baptist Church in Waynesboro, Virginia. He and his family were honored, as is the custom, with a reception and a parting gift.

John David Cave

John David Cave was born in Williamston, South Carolina on October 29, 1929. His father, Rev. J.A. Cave, was pastor of Mountain Creek Baptist Church, the largest rural church in South Carolina. His brother is pastor of the St. John's Baptist Church Charlotte, N.C.

Dr. Cave graduated from: North Greenville Junior College, Tigerville, S.C., with an A.A. in 1948; Furman University, Greenville, S.C., with a B.S. in 1950; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, with a B.D. in 1953.

In 1954 he was ordained into the ministry by Mountain Creek Baptist Church and in that same year he and Miss Laura Carden of Tennessee were married. Mrs. Cave is a graduate of the University of Tennessee with a B.S. in music. The Caves have three children: David, Phillip, and Laura Lee.

Dr. Cave was pastor at Honey Grove, Texas from 1952 to 1956. In 1956-1958 he was Associate Pastor with Dr. Monroe Swilley, Jr. at the Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia. He received the Doctor of Theology degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, in 1957. In 1958-1962 he was pastor of the East Washington Heights Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

In 1962 Dr. and Mrs. Cave were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board to serve in Argentina. The years 1962 and 1963 were spent in language study (Spanish) in Costa Rica. The next ten years (1963-1973) Dr. Cave, Professor of Philosophy and Theology, taught at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires. He also served as pastor of the English-speaking International Baptist Church in Buenos Aires in 1969-1973.

Having completed their tour of duty in Argentina, the Caves returned to the States and Dr. Cave served as Visiting Professor of Missions at the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri.

Dr. John David Cave accepted the call to our church in January 1975, the first foreign missionary to pastor our people. He and his family were enthusiastically received and immediately became involved in both church and community life. Mrs. Cave, a soprano, is a splendid addition to our choir.

In February the church was vandalized when fire extinguishers were discharged, towel racks torn from the walls of rest rooms, doors removed from brackets and the walls abused. Most of the damage was confined to the Day Care area. Some of our R.A. boys repainted the rooms.

Dr. Cave instituted a Neighborhood File (the congregation divided into 25 neighborhoods with deacons in charge of each one) and began the practice of having four deacons join the pastor for prayer each Sunday at 10:45.

On June 1, 1975 the church celebrated its 95th birthday at the morning worship service with the recognition of members belonging to the church for 40, 50, and 60 years. The drama department presented a costumed skit reenacting the constituting of our church on June 1, 1880. At four o'clock that afternoon, Mrs. S.T. Anderson and Mr. W.B. Middleton, two of our oldest members, cut the ribbons on the double doors at the entrance to our new fellowship hall. Special music, speeches by the city mayor and church leaders, and joyous fellowship were the order of the day as our newest facility was dedicated. The Alice Temple Lounge, adjacent to the fellowship hall, was named in memory of this dedicated member, former church hostess and unofficial "Goodwill Ambassador."

Also in June, Dr. Cave attended the Southern Baptist Convention in Miami and took his first vacation. In his absence, Dr. Edward Hughes Pruden supplied the pulpit. Dr. Pruden, former pastor of the First Church, Washington, D.C., is retired but active as teacher at Southeastern Seminary and chaplain of the North Carolina Legislature. On July 20, Dr. Pruden requested that the congregation share with him by singing a hymn of his own composing, "Anniversary Hymn," to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination.

During the summer of 1975, the church honored our community leaders. Mr. C.B. Capps, councilman, read the scripture from Romans 13:1-8; Mr. Jeff Batts, attorney, led in prayer; and the pastor preached on "Christ and the Community."

The occasion of Rev. J.R. Everett's retirement as Minister of Visitation (for health reasons) prompted the congregation to show their esteem and appreciation at a "J.R. Everett Day." Mr. George Hooks, chairman of deacons, gave the eulogy and presented the love gift from the congregation.

A ministry to our senior adults was begun September 22 with Mr. Carl Kilgo as temporary chairman of the initial committee. This group is made up of people 55 and over. They meet each fourth Monday night in the month. The name "Young and Restless" was used at first but, due to some objections, was changed to "Forever Young." Mr. H.D. White is the present chairman.

Also in September there was a World Missions Conference. Joint sessions were held in the Fellowship Hall each evening with different speakers each night. At the Sunday morning worship service Leon S. White, missionary to Argentina, was guest minister. Other speakers during the Conference were

George Cowsert of South Brazil; Nathan Brooks of the North Carolina Baptist Convention; DeLane Ryals, Director of Church Extension in Metropolitan New York; Leslie Keys, missionary to Honduras; and Boris Rock, a Russian now working as a home missionary to the Slavics in Pennsylvania.

Several women's names were submitted by the congregation for the diaconate in 1975 but were rejected by the deacons with a vote of 11 to 10.

At the church conference in December 1975, it was announced that $3,640 had been received for the Children's Homes and that the 1976 budget had already been subscribed by 104.6%. The 1976 budget is $172,480. This does not include the mission goals ($13,000) or the Day Care, which is self-supporting.

The month of February 1976 was designated the "Five Fabulous Sundays" because of the rarity of this occurrence. Special promotion was given to Sunday School attendance which reached 558, with an average of 505 for the month. On the second Sunday, Danny Sewell gave his testimony of what Sunday School means to him and his family. At the evening service, Mrs. A.L. Stancil presented "A Vocal Focal" as a part of the W.M.U. Focus Week emphasis.

On the third Sunday, six families brought their young children for dedication and to affirm their intention of providing Christian homes for their families. The fourth Sunday focused on Youth and their "Joy Explosion" (*J*esus, *O*thers, *Y*ou). This began on Friday night with a Lock-in, followed by breakfast Saturday morning. Saturday night there was a covered dish dinner in the Fellowship Hall, followed by a rally and more fun and fellowship. A team of four students from

Southeastern Seminary worked with our young people February 20-22 in the "Joy Explosion."

The fifth Sunday, February 29, was "Old Fashioned Sunday." Old household articles, antiques, and farm implements were on display in the old Fellowship Hall. Many members came dressed in centennial costumes or clothing of a by-gone era. Even the preacher wore his string tie! During the morning service, old hymns were sung and Mr. R.L. Rogers, one of our senior members, played a hymn on the reed-pump organ, loaned to the church by Mr. Don Johnson, chairman of deacons.

Mrs. John R. Lee, in centennial dress, presented an incident of church discipline taken from the church record of 1891. This concerned "The Mystic Circle Affair" in which a prominent young man of the church joined the Mystic Circle Dance Club and was brought before the church council for trial. This was a customary proceeding at that time. This particular trial was unique in that it lasted five months and was never concluded. We can only conjecture why the council was unable to come to a decision. It was dropped when the young man asked that his name be erased from the church roll.

Mr. John Privott taught the Home Mission book *Tomorrow Starts Today* on February 29 and March 7 at 7:30 P.M. The Week of Prayer for Home Missions, "A New Birth of Freedom," began March 7-14.

In the meantime, the Search Committee had secured a Minister of Music and Youth, Mr. William V. Grisham, who began his work here February 17. Following the evening service on February 29, the Grishams were welcomed with a reception in the Fellowship Hall.

The March 17th *Outreach* announced that the church had

acquired an Activity Bus. The bus is the gift of Mr. J.D. Winstead, Sr. and will be gratefully used by all of our many organizations.

At the morning worship service on April 18, a brief memorial service was held for the twenty members lost by death during the previous year. At the evening service, a Tenebrae or Service of Shadows was presented by the Chancel and Handbell Choirs, the Chamber Singers, Mr. Bill Nelms, reader, Mr. Dave Kirk, organist, and Mr. Bill Grisham, director.

On the evening of April 24, the Martha Gilliland Baptist Women received in honor of Dr. Martha Gilliland, medical missionary to Nigeria who was on furlough. A love offering was presented to Dr. Martha. The following day, Sunday, she addressed the congregation concerning her work in Nigeria.

Sunday morning, May 9, Dr. Cave preached the Mother's Day sermon on the topic "God's Design for Wives." That evening the Christian Characters presented "A Little Bit of This, A Little Bit of That."

Dr. Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern Seminary was featured speaker at a banquet given by the church in appreciation of the Sunday School officers and teachers on May 20.

Our third Pictorial Directory is being prepared by Le Mann and Associates. It should soon be ready for distribution.

In 1976 our 96th church anniversary fell on June 6, at which time we celebrated with a Homecoming. Dr. Russell Cherry, former pastor, was our guest minister.

Fourteen landmark decisions made by the church through the years were reviewed by members, both vocally and by placards. Returned former members were recognized. Follow-

ing the church service, a picnic was spread in the Peoples Bank Park back of the Fellowship Hall. Good fellowship and a puppet show concluded the day's festivities.

Saturday evening, June 12, Mr. and Mrs. Norman N. Burnes III, missionaries on furlough from Greece, were honored by our church. On Sunday, June 13, Rev. Burnes was guest minister.

Vacation Bible School, Mrs. George Hooks superintendent, was in session June 14-23 with an average attendance of 241. Approximately 50 children were bussed in, using our Activity Bus. The children came from Powell Drive, Fox Run, Quail Hollow, and Old Mill Road. Enrollment reached 300.

On June 17, a chartered bus carried about 43 members to the Southern Baptist Convention in Norfolk, Virginia for the day.

On Christian Citizenship Day, June 27, our special guests were the Rocky Mount city officials. Those helping in the service were City Manager Cyrus Brooks, Councilman Walter Mears, and Chief of Police Arthur Butler.

On the evening of June 27, the Music Ministry presented Robert Hale, bass-baritone with the New York City Opera Company, and Dean Wilder, tenor and Director of Vocal Studies at William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri, and also with the N.Y. City Opera. Ovid Young was accompanist-arranger. These dedicated Christians and professional musicians gave a moving sacred concert which included humor, joy, and adoration.

Our Minister of Music, Bill Grisham, is beginning work with a group in Hand Puppets and expects to expand this ministry in the fall to Senior and Junior High students. He also hopes to be able to interest some senior church members in

playing the Handbells. He is preparing mini-concerts for the rest of the summer, using talented choir personnel. On August 22, the Youth Choir will present a pulpit musical drama, "Celebrate Life," by Buryl Red.

Sunday, July 4, 1976, we celebrated our country's 200th Birthday with a patriotic service and a sermon on "The On-Going Revolution." At the evening service, the film "Martin Luther" was shown.

That afternoon, our pastor and his wife left for a two-week vacation in Colombia and Ecuador, South America.

On Wednesday evening, July 7, the focus was on patriotism and missions, with the WMU leading in a celebration of our mission heritage and challenge. Those presenting "Missions Horizons" were members of Baptist Women, Baptist Young Women, Acteens, and Girls Auxiliary.

The present total value of our church buildings and their contents is $1,882,000. The land value is $240,000. Our total present membership is 1985, with 1419 resident members.

A sweet spirit is permeating our fellowship. Involvement, generosity, joy, goodwill and concern for others are bringing our members into harmonious unity. Our pastor, led by the Spirit, is leading our fellowship to produce the fruits of the Spirit.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Proverbs 14:34.

These first six months of 1976 have been a time of jubilation. Let us give thanks to God.

"Let those who desire my vindication shout for joy and be glad, and say evermore, 'Great is the Lord, who delights in the welfare of his servant!' Then my tongue shall tell of thy righ-

teousness and of thy praise all the day long." Psalm 35:27. R.S.V.

Associate Pastors
Rev. McKinley Gilliland

Rev. McKinley Gilliland, our first full-time assistant pastor and young peoples' worker, came as Dr. Kincheloe's assistant in 1939. Mac and his fiancee had already taken the examination for foreign mission work in Africa before he came to Rocky Mount. Due to the war, they couldn't be assigned until conditions were stabilized. Mac frankly told the church his plans, saying he would resign from our work when the Foreign Mission Board called him. Rev. Gilliland of Attalla, Alabama and Dr. Martha Jordan of Birmingham, Alabama were married on June 24, 1939 and returned to Rocky Mount to make fast friends.

Called into service in 1940, Mac was chaplain in China and India. When his tour of duty ended, he and Martha began final preparations toward fulfilling their dream. In 1942 the Gillilands were appointed to Ogbomosho. Mac was made professor of preaching and church history in the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho in 1947. Dr. Martha, a surgeon, is resident staff doctor at Baptist Hospital, Ogbomosho, practicing obstetrics and gynecology.

After years in Africa, Mac suffered a brain tumor, was returned stateside and died in Birmingham, Alabama on June 25, 1964.

Though our church didn't send out Mac and Martha, the ties have been very strong, and they are regarded as our "special" missionaries. We have continued to minister to them

with love and prayer. Our night Woman's Missionary Society is named in honor of Martha. Under the auspices of the Benevolence Committee, Carl Kilgo, chairman, a sun dial was placed on the lawn beside the sanctuary in memory of Mac. The dedication took place May 30, 1965 following the morning worship service. Dr. Gilliland, her daughter Diana, son-in-law Bill Connelly, and granddaughter Irene Elizabeth, were present for the event. Dr. Gilliland's son Peter was still in school at the time. Dr. Martha is still on the field at Ogbomosho.

Rev. Clarence Godwin

Rev. Clarence Godwin was our next full-time associate pastor, coming in 1946-1948. He and his wife, Betty, endeared themselves to our people. Upon resignation, Clarence served pastorates in Cary and Winston-Salem and then was called back to Rocky Mount as the first pastor of the newly constituted Lakeside Baptist Church. He is presently pastor at First Church in Oxford, N.C.

Rev. William C. Lamm

Bill Lamm was an efficient associate pastor and young peoples' worker in 1949-1950. He is presently a capable leader in the N.C. Convention as head of the Department of Evangelism. He was taken ill at the Southern Baptist Convention in Miami in 1975, but is improving.

Rev. Eslie R. Phillips, Jr.

Eslie Phillips came to our church in 1950, as associate to

Dr. Kincheloe. He graduated from the University of Virginia in 1946; from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky in 1950. In 1970 he earned his Master's degree from the Seminary.

Rev. Phillips was married to Gazelle Hudgins Moore of Newport News, Virginia in our church. Mrs. Phillips is a graduate of Meredith College with a major in organ. Before her marriage she was Minister of Music at the Tarboro Baptist Church, Tarboro, N.C. The Phillips have three children: Rolland, Kristin, and Nathan.

Mr. Phillips served our church during 1950-1953, preaching Sunday evening, leading the Wednesday evening service, and directing the ministry to youth.

Since that time he has served the Aulander and Downtown Baptist Churches, Aulander, N.C.; West End Church, Petersburg, Virginia; Grove Avenue Church, Richmond, Virginia; and Talbot Park Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia.

In 1971 Eslie toured the Holy Land; in 1972 he went on a preaching mission in Northeast England; and in September 1975 he led a group from Talbot Park in a revival crusade at the Tabernacle in Stockton-on-Tees, England.

Rev. Shelby Royal

Rev. Shelby Royal served as assistant pastor and youth director in 1960-1963. Shelby was the nephew of one of our deacons, T. Ray Vaughn. He was especially effective with intermediates and in Vacation Bible School. He was a graduate of Mercer College and received his Master's degree from Southeastern Seminary. Shelby is presently living at Gretna, Virginia and teaching at Averette Junior College. He also serves as interim pastor as needed.

James L. Bland

James L. Bland came as an associate pastor in March 1955 and served until July 1955.

Summer Assistants

The first seminary student who worked as assistant pastor and minister of youth during the summer months was Rev. Samuel Lewis Morgan, Jr. He served our church in the summers of 1937, 1938, and 1939. Rev. Morgan was from Creedmore, the son of a prominent North Carolina Baptist leader. He is now serving a pastorate in Washington, D.C.

Other summer pastors were Rev. Carlton Mitchell (1943); Rev. Fred Badders (6 months in 1964); Rev. John Carter (summers of 1965 and 1966); and Rev. Ray Flynn (summers of 1967 and 1968).

Harry D. Griffin

Rev. Harry Griffin came as a full-time associate to Mr. Higdon in 1972. Harry worked for and received his Doctor of Ministries degree from Southeastern Seminary while serving our church. While fulfilling his regular duties, he gave special impetus and emphasis to supportive work with the elderly and to continuing education. Classes were held in flower arranging, free-lance writing, the Psalms, furniture refinishing, etc., according to the interests of those participating. During the Billy Graham Crusade in Raleigh, bus loads of Senior Citizens and Youth of the church were taken for an outing and attendance at the Crusade.

Dr. Griffin resigned in 1975 to accept a pastorate in Raleigh.

Ordained in Our Church

Seven young men are known to have been ordained in our church. Six were reared in the nurture of our fellowship. One, Rev. Mialik, was from an outside fellowship.

The first young man to be ordained in our church of whom we have a record was Rev. Q.C. Davis. Rev. Davis was a member of our church and was ordained to the ministry on April 28, 1892. Dr. J.D. Hufham, Dr. R.T. Vann, Rev. J.W. Powell, and Rev. J.F. Love made up the consistory.

John William Kincheloe, Jr., son of our beloved pastor, was ordained in our church in 1928. After earning his Doctor of Philosophy degree and serving several pastorates (the last of which was Branch's Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia), he is now retired. Dr. Kincheloe is at present helping Mount Hermon Church in Caroline County, Virginia.

Rev. Eugene Williams has served in several capacities and is now Executive Secretary of the Richmond Baptist Association, Richmond, Virginia.

Dr. Earl Parker studied at Oxford, England and worked briefly at our church. His present address is not known.

Rev. Joseph Harold Coggins was ordained in our church April 2, 1950. Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Coggins has served his country as Army Chaplain in the United States, Japan, Alaska, and Taiwan. He is presently stationed in Denver, Colorado.

Rev. Emil Mialik was working in the Rocky Mount area as a student missionary when he was ordained by our church. His present whereabouts are not known.

Rev. Russell Myers was a member and a deacon in our church when he was ordained. He accepted his first pastorate in Elm City.

Interim Pastors

Through the years, we have had unusually fine interim pastors. Among the best-loved have been Dr. Luther Copeland, Dr. Eugene Owens, Dr. Marc Lovelace, and Dr. Donald E. Cook.

Evangelists

Some of the most eminent and best remembered evangelists who have led revivals in our church are Dr. George W. McDaniel, Dr. Roland Q. Leavell, Dr. Ellis Fuller, Dr. Kyle Yates, Rev. Angel Martinez, and Dr. Charles Howard.

Retired Ministers

We have been most fortunate in having retired ministers in our congregation much of the time. Among those in recent years have been Dr. J.W. Kincheloe, pastor emeritus; Rev. G.N. Cowan; Rev. J.E. Lanier; Rev. Hurley C. Lowder; and Rev. J.R. Everett, who, during Dr. Higdon's pastorate, served as Minister of Visitation. For health reasons, he retired from this work in 1975. Mr. Charles M. Harrison is an ordained minister presently serving in our church as deacon and Sunday School teacher. Rev. Ross E. Moyer, former pastor of North Rocky Mount Baptist Church, joined our church March 25, 1976.

CHAPTER IV

WE REMEMBER TO PRAISE GOD

"Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise." Psalm 33:2, 3.

In the early days of our church, all music was offered to God on a voluntary basis and, for the most part, by amateurs. Choir members dressed according to their individual taste, for vestments were taboo in a Baptist Church. For a long time, any instrument other than the human voice, organ and piano was unacceptable.

The first musical instrument used was the old style reed pump organ, requiring the organist to peddle fast in order to sustain an even flow of tone.

Organists for this instrument were Mrs. George L. Parker, Sr., Mrs. Caroline S. Nunn, Miss Bonnie Nunn, and Miss

Worship Service September 12, 1976

Lillie Arrington, who married Rev. J.W. Powell. Mrs. Parker, Mrs. Nunn, and Miss Bonnie were local piano teachers. The baby grand piano now in our sanctuary is a memorial to Miss Bonnie, who willed her home on Hill Street to our church at her death.

Mrs. George Parker not only played the pump organ and piano, but directed the choir and developed an excellent male quartet. The quartet was made up of Tom A. Avera, Will W. Avera, George L. Parker, Jr., and J.R. Bobbitt. They became so popular they finally disbanded because their singing engagements were interferring with making a living. Mrs. Parker also organized the first Royal Ambassadors.

Miss Ada Shearin, daughter of one of our deacons and graduate of Meredith College, was the first pipe organist. She taught and played our organ from 1912 to 1922, when she

married Mr. Parker of Henderson, N.C. and moved to that city. Now a widow, she is still active in the music of the First Baptist Church in Henderson.

During approximately this same time period, Mrs. Minnie Haynes, a direct descendant of the famous Siamese twins, married Mr. Will Avera, a deacon, and directed the choir for about two years. She was followed by Miss Kitty Poole, soloist and choir director.

Miss Poole was succeeded by Mrs. C.A. Griffin, wife of a deacon. When Mr. Griffin died, Mrs. Griffin resigned. Then Mrs. J.T. Maddrey, interim from Scotland Neck, commuted for choir rehearsals and Sunday services. Because she was unable to look after funeral music, Miss Irene Parker, Meredith graduate, was selected for this duty. During all this time and up until about 1950, the choir or choir members sang for every funeral when requested to do so. This included church members, non-church members, and transients. Some requests were very unreasonable and all required working choir members to get off from their jobs in order to sing.

Happily, with more funeral chapels and recorded music available, decisions were made which brought the situation back within the bounds of reason.

Mrs. Clarence A. Griffin and Miss Irene Parker (later Mrs. E.H. Tharrington) each directed the choir for many years. Mrs. Griffin reminisced that Dr. and Mrs. Kincheloe used to express their appreciation of the choir by giving them a wild turkey dinner or quail supper! (Mrs. Kincheloe was an avid music lover.) A few years later, the deacons inaugurated the custom of giving the choir a banquet, usually around Christmas time.

After Miss Ada Shearin married, Miss Maggie Mae Rob-

bins (Mrs. Lyman C. Jones) graduated from Salem College with a major in organ and became our next organist. She remained in this position for approximately twenty-five years. Mrs. Jones gave the amplifier for the organ chimes as a memorial to her parents, Mr. and Mrs. S. Robbins.

Adult choir in first vestments—1948

Until this time there had never been any youth choir in our church. In 1926, Miss Irene Parker offered to divide her salary ($35.00 a month) if Miss Florence Winstead, recent voice graduate of N.C.C.W. (now UNC-G), would organize a youth choir. Miss Winstead accepted the offer, gathered a choir of high school boys and girls and vested them. A moot innovation! Unfortunately, the choir lasted only a year, for when the director again left town to teach, the choir disintegrated for lack of leadership. It was years before youth choirs were again attempted.

When Miss Parker married Mr. E.H. Tharrington, they lived out of town a number of years, and Mrs. C.A. Griffin again directed the choir. When Mr. Griffin died and Mrs. Griffin resigned, she presented the sterling collection plates, now in use, to the church as a memorial to her husband. Following Mrs. J.T. Maddrey, interim director, Mrs. John R. Lee (Florence Winstead) directed the vested choir for four years.

When Mrs. Lyman Jones resigned as organist, interim organists who served were T. Mason Bell, 1933; Vernon F. Jordan and Mrs. E.H. Austin. Later interim organists were Miriam Knowles, Phillip Edwards, and Irene Dixon.

In 1931 the deacons allowed $130 per month for choir music and musicians. It was customary to employ paid soloists. At one time or another, almost every musician in town was used as soloist or director. The following is a list of the known soloists from other congregations: Jack Brady, violinist, 1929; Mrs. Howard T. Gunn, soprano, 1932; Mrs. George R. Edwards, soprano, 1936; Miss Cody Hipps, soprano, 1943; Mrs. R.T. Simrell, soprano, 1947; Hugh K. Hughes, tenor, several years; and Mrs. Lester J. Vause, violinist, one year.

Dr. Leonard Earl Harris, organist-director, who succeeded Mrs. Lee, was the first to bear the title "Minister of Music". He was with us from 1949 to 1952.

Dr. Harris was followed by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Horton, both of whom were organists. Charles directed while Mrs. Horton accompained. Mr. Horton was a member of the faculty of the state-wide music conference in June 1955. Later in the same year he resigned to become a member of the faculty of Campbell College. Mrs. C.R. Shuler was interim director

for a few months, and Mrs. B.R. Thompson frequently supplied at the organ. In March 1958, Mr. Horton returned with the Campbell College touring choir to present a sacred concert.

On October 15, 1955 Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Adams became the first to inaugurate a system of graded choirs. Mr. Adams, Minister of Music, and Mrs. Adams, organist, started the choirs according to the standard of excellence required by the Southern Baptist Convention Music Department. In December, five choirs presented "The Christmas Story".

In January 1956, an hour was set aside for adult music study, music listening and informal singing. Volunteer choir mothers for junior age and older children's groups were enlisted. In March 1956, a men's chorus, sponsored by the Brotherhood, was led by Jack Henderson. In June of the same year, a summer music school program was begun with the Carol, Cherub, Intermediate and Crusader Choirs participating.

By September 1956, the music program was organized as follows:

Cherub Choir	Ages 6, 7, 8	Boys and Girls
Carol Choir	Ages 9, 10, 11	Girls
Crusader Choir	Ages 9, 10, 11	Boys
Concord Choir	Ages Junior High or Intermediates	
Adult Choir	Early Sunday Service or Night	
Adult Choir	Eleven o'clock Sunday Service	

The Kindergarten and Beginners were taught singing and Rhythm Band. Adult choir members and prospects were given free private voice lessons.

In January, 1955, the music committee had recommended replacing the first pipe organ which now needed constant repair. It was our good fortune that, in 1956, Mrs. S.E.

Ballentine gave the church a Kilgan organ in memory of her husband, Simon Eugene Ballentine, a former deacon.

In June 1957, Miss Mary Lee Parker, daughter of Dr. George L. Parker, deacon and choir member, gave a program of sacred songs and spirituals.

In July 1957, a Chapel Choir was organized composed of high school youth and young adults. The 1957 Christmas program was presented by the Men's Chorus, directed by Claude Mayo, and the Youth Choir, directed by W.H. Adams.

When Mr. Adams resigned in August 1958, the interim directors were Mrs. Elizabeth Ingram, Mrs. Mack Brown, and Mr. Harold Parry. Interim organists were Mrs. W.D. Daniels and Mr. Ted Gossett.

Miss Virginia Ekleberry assumed the work of Minister of Music in September 1958. In March 1959, the Carol Choir received an "A" rating at the Regional Hymn Festival. The Christmas Cantata in 1959 was "King All Glorious". Miss Ekleberry submitted her resignation in September 1960. Larry Gupton worked with our youth choirs in the summer of 1959.

Dr. William Sasser of the music faculty of N.C. Wesleyan College became minister of music in October, 1960. However, his responsibility was limited to the eleven o'clock adult choir. Mrs. Robert Daughtridge directed the Celestial, Cherub, Carol, Concord, and Chapel Choirs.

During Dr. Branch's tenure as pastor, an early service was held in the Chapel during Sunday School hour. This was the children's church. From 8:40 A.M. until the 9:40 Sunday School hour, Dr. Branch conducted an early morning worship service in the sanctuary. Ted Gossett was organist-director for this choir.

The Palm Sunday and Easter music in 1962 was presented

under the leadership of Dr. Sasser and Ted Gossett. Mrs. Paul Wilkins began work with the intermediate choir and youth choir in 1962, and Mrs. Edith Strickland directed the Cherub Choir. Mrs. Charles Rakov was also a director of children's choirs in 1962.

In October 1963, the First Presbyterian Choir, directed by Larry Gupton, and the First Baptist Choir, directed by Dr. Sasser, with Ted Gossett as organist, gave a combined music service. Mrs. J.W. O'Donnell did some choir directing in 1963.

Ted Gossett and Larry Gupton, both fine young musicians, grew up in our church, earned Master's degrees in music, and returned to Rocky Mount to use their many talents.

In 1964, Miss Nettie Bunn directed the Primary and Junior Choirs.

Dr. Sasser resigned in 1965 and Ted Gossett became Minister of Music and organist. Among other things, Ted raised the money, purchased the handbells, and trained our first handbell choir. Needless to say, all choirs had long been vested and choir mothers secured for the young choirs. It had become commonplace to augment the choir by bringing in young musicians from Wesleyan College, East Carolina University, and Raleigh. For special programs, additional instruments were used such as trumpets, percussions, and string quartet.

In 1968, Ted Gossett resigned to continue music study and Dave Kirk became interim organist and choir director. He served until June 1969, when Roger and Jennie Lamb came. Roger and Jennie are both organists. In 1970, Jennie was made paid accompanist.

In 1973-1974, Mrs. Lib Wordsworth helped with the

Beginner Choir. Roger and Jennie worked together to train the graded choirs. This included basic note values, signs, breathing, voice production, musical terms, rhythm and hymnology. The Handbell Choir is continuing with seventh and eighth graders. The Youth Choir (Chamber Singers) sings for the Sunday evening service and has done some touring. The eleven o'clock adult choir is given special training in vocal technique, choral tone, blend and balance.

When Mr. and Mrs. Lamb had been with us five years, in appreciation, an especially delightful party was given them by the church, planned by Mr. Higdon and Mr. Harry Griffin, with the cooperation of the adult choir. In addition to the fellowship and refreshments, members of the choir enacted a "typical" choir rehearsal for everyone's merriment.

We owe much to our choirs who work hard to produce lovely music, adding beauty, meaning, and atmosphere to evoke the worship experience. Choir members and congregation alike profit from the addition of melody and harmony to the timeless and unending riches of God's Word, making them stick fast in the memory.

The *Outreach* for August 8, 1975 carried the letter of resignation of Roger and Jennie Lamb. They began a new work at the First Baptist Church of Waynesboro, Virginia on September 1, 1975.

Our interim organist was Dave Kirk, while Larry Gupton served as part-time director. Larry is presently a choral director in the public school system.

The new Minister of Music, William V. Grisham of Arlington, Texas, arrived in mid-February 1976. He will also serve as Minister of Youth.

Mr. Grisham's undergraduate work was done at Bakersfield

College in Bakersfield, California and at Baylor University, Waco, Texas. He received the Bachelor of Music Education degree in 1967. While at Baylor, he served as Minister of Youth at College Avenue Baptist Church.

In August 1967, he joined the Navy. After basic training, he served on an aircraft carrier as an attack pilot and in various administrative positions with teaching responsibilities. His service obligation was completed in November 1973.

Chancel Choir and Handbell Quartet—1976

In January 1974, Mr. Grisham entered Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and completed his Master of Church Music degree in December 1975. At the same time, he was serving as Minister of Music and Youth at Mayfield Road Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas.

While in school, Mr. Grisham received many music honors,

among them the presidency of Phi Mu Alpha, National Professional Music Fraternity. He was also ordained to the Gospel Ministry of Music.

Bill is married to the former Mary Catherine Baker of Texas. They have two children, Kristin Elizabeth and William Todd. Mrs. Grisham, a graduate of the University of North Florida, is a violinist and soprano soloist.

On the evening of April 11, 1976, Mr. Grisham presented the Chancel Choir, Chamber Singers, and the Handbell Choir in a Tenebrae Service (Service of Shadows). This moving portrayal through scripture and song showed the suffering of our Lord as he passed through the shadows to his crucifixion. The Resurrection and Life Eternal climaxed this spiritual experience as we shared something of our Savior's anguish and victory.

Dave Kirk was organist, Bill Nelms, reader, and Bill Grisham was director.

CHAPTER V

WE REMEMBER OUR LEADERS

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." I Cor. 15:58.

Church Clerks

When the Rocky Mount Baptist Church was constituted in 1880, Harlow D. Avera was elected church clerk, the first elected official. The following is a list of all church clerks, 1880-1976:

1. Harlow D. Avera
2. W.B. Spiers
3. G.L.W. Pegram
4. C.E. Timmons
5. S.V.T. Chamblee
6. C.W. Wilson
7. C.A. Hesser
8. T.C. Rowland
9. W.W. Avera
10. Sam L. Arrington

Church Treasurers

In 1890, Brother George L. Parker, Sr. was elected our first church treasurer. He was followed by J.D. Christian, E.T. Joyner, W.D. Joyner, D. Ernest Bulluck, and Jeff Batts. Our present treasurer is Russell Edmondson.

Deacons

The first deacons, T.M. Arrington and C.F. Ellen, were elected in 1882. For years, the deacons were few in number and unorganized. During Dr. Kesler's pastorate, the concept of deacons as spiritual leaders was emphasized. By 1902, they were known as the "Board of Deacons." As their number grew, a chairman and secretary were elected. Finally, they were fully organized and divided into as many committees as necessary, with delegated responsibility. The chairmen served for indefinite periods through Tom Avera's tenure, when the chairman's term of service was limited to one year.

During Dr. Branch's pastorate, the deacons—in accord with the new constitution—began rotation, the full quota of deacons being set at 40.

Besides their regular duties as spiritual and business leaders, the deacons have had special projects such as the annual banquet for the choir and their spouses and the furnishing of a room at the Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem.

From time to time classes have been conducted to improve the quality of the diaconate by the study of books like *The Deacon at Work* by F.A. Agar. In 1973, a committee was appointed to re-examine the method of electing deacons. Their report states "We recommend two things that we feel will benefit our members and help it to be a congregational church government.

"1. That the church shall distribute to each member a list of male members of the church, that are twenty-one years of age or over, two weeks prior to nomination of our deacons.

"2. That the congregation be given the opportunity to vote for twice as many nominees as are to be elected."

In 1974, Mr. Higdon led the deacons in a workshop. The same year, guidelines for serving as a deacon were drawn up.

Present life deacons are Sam L. Arrington, W.B. Middleton, and A.L. Brandon.

The chairmen of deacons from 1922-1976 are as follows:

1922-33	T.A. Avera
1934	C.A. Griffin
1935-36	M.D. Munn
1937	R.S. Conyers
1938	J.A. Harper
1939	T.W. Coleman
1940	W.G. Robbins
1941	S.L. Arrington
1942	C.C. Ward
1943	C.W. Parker
1944	Roscoe Griffin
1945	John J. Wells
1946	A.L. Brandon
1947	E.F. Duke
1948	I.A. Watson
1949	W.R. Coleman
1950	P.H. Bradshaw
1951	John King
1952	Herman Merrell
1953	D.E. Bulluck
1954	E.E. Murchison
1955-56	C.C. Harris
1957	H.D. White
1958-59	Wiley Meares
1960	Alfred L. Stancil
1961	James R. Batten
1962	W.E. King
1963	Hiram Harris
1964	T.H. LeCroy
1965	T. Ray Vaughan
1966	Russell Edmondson
1967	Jack W. Henderson
1968	Henry I. Tharrington
1969-70	John T. High
1971	Jeff D. Batts
1972	Ben L. Allen
1973	Alwyn Phillips, Jr.
1974	Earl Posey
1975	George L. Hooks, Jr.
1976	Don L. Johnson

Trustees

Our past trustees have been: H.D. Avera, G.M. Lindsey, George L. Parker, Sr., C.W. Simmons, E.W. Shearin, Tom A. Avera, T.M. Arrington, J.H. Short, W.W. Avera, W.R. Lancaster, W.D. Joyner, Tom W. Coleman, William R. Coleman, George L. Parker, Jr., and Herman Merrell.

Our present trustees are: Sam L. Arrington, Jeff D. Batts, and Russell B. Edmondson.

Ministers of Education

A Meredith graduate, Miss Imogene Douglas, who came to us in 1954, was our first educational director. She resigned August 15, 1955.

In 1956, a former associate of Dr. Branch, Miss Virginia Beall, came as educational director. A graduate of Carver School of Missions in Louisville, she was dedicated, hard-working, and efficient. Virginia remained to marry one of our deacons, Mr. George L. Hooks, Jr., and to serve as interim educational director following the resignation of Dr. Harold T. Gallaspy, Clarence Vassar, and Earl Long. Virginia's first love is Vacation Bible School, but she willingly serves in any capacity where she is needed. When Dr. Branch resigned to assume state leadership, a heavy load was placed on her shoulders. The new educational building was unfinished; there was the big job of moving into new quarters; the age-grading of the adult Sunday School (against vigorous opposition from some); all of this, in addition to the regular weekly responsibilities and attempting to prepare for the added classes by conducting study courses and upgrading standards, made her task a formidable one. Again in 1975, Virginia served on a

part-time basis as interim Minister of Education while a search committee sought a permanent person for this position. In 1976, the search continues.

Dr. Harold T. Gallaspy served as educational director from 1961 to 1963, during Mr. Sodeman's pastorate. Dr. Gallaspy was dedicated, kind and cooperative. Perhaps his most lasting accomplishment was the publication of the *Outreach,* the weekly church paper which he began in October 1961 and which still continues.

Mr. Clarence Vassar came in 1965, during Dr. Cherry's pastorate. A disciplinarian, his main responsibility was the Day Care Center and the Kindergarten. He is now associated with Dr. Cherry in Lumberton, N.C.

Mr. Earl Long was educational director from 1967 to 1969. He gave great emphasis to teacher training. His wife, Rosemary, used her lovely soprano voice to enhance our choir.

From 1970 to 1971, Mr. Ray Luck was the educational director.

CHAPTER VI

WE REMEMBER TO REACH OUT IN LOVE

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." I Cor. 13:13.

Benevolence

Benevolence has been a way of life for our church. Our earliest church records reveal Christian generosity toward the needy, the widow and orphan. In spite of hard times and the tiny membership of an infant church, food and small cash love offerings were contributed to members in need. At least twice, wooden coffins were supplied as well as transportation of the deceased to the cemetery. The church bore all expenses for these deceased members, including the digging of the graves. In another instance, a sick mother with small children was given the loan of a cow so her children could have milk, and the church also pledged her $5.00 a month.

Through all the years, when the membership has been informed of needs, it has rallied to the cause with alacrity and

love. At first it was a spontaneous response to a specific need; not an organized continuing and integral church program. Numberless people, within and without the church, have been helped by our compassionate church members.

In 1951 Mr. Carl Kilgo, with the help of Mr. W.M. Wester, began enlisting the members of the large Men's Bible Class to aid needy families and visit the sick in homes and hospitals. His project was greatly encouraged by Dr. J.W. Kincheloe and the assistant pastor, Eslie Phillips.

At the suggestion of Mrs. Alice Temple, Church Hostess, Mr. Kilgo enlarged the work to include food baskets for needy persons at Christmas. This was not limited to church members, and also included gifts of cheer to the aged. This is how White Christmas came to be an annual event in our church.

In August 1953, Dr. Douglas Branch informed Mr. Kilgo that $500 was available in the church budget for benevolence work. From then on, the work operated on an organized basis, underwritten in the church budget and under the aegis of a church appointed Benevolence Committee. As always, however, it has been supplemented by individual gifts from generous members for special needs.

A pantry for the needy was begun; a Hayes Lifter for bed-ridden patients and several wheel chairs were purchased; a clothes closet put in operation for several years had to be phased out due to lack of storage; meals and even bus tickets sometimes were supplied stranded transients; a hospital bed is on loan to the church; and Mr. Frank Yost of Gay-Yost Funeral Home donated the stretcher which is kept in readiness for an emergency in the vestibule of the church. It has been used a number of times.

Besides the above, committee members visit the sick and aged, make decisions about supplying emergency relief money

where needed, supply heaters, fuel, hearing aids, and meat for the food baskets at Christmas. Men of the church and the Royal Ambassadors load the baskets and deliver them before Christmas Eve.

In 1954, Miss Janet Cox, who operates the Youth Shop, began a Memorial Fund in memory of her mother, Jenny Garrett Cox, to be used by the church for benevolent purposes such as purchasing hearing aids, glasses or in general adding to the comfort and enjoyment of older people in need. The Benevolence Committee makes use of this fund when necessary.

In 1966, serious efforts, especially by the Benevolence Committee, were made to install an elevator to the sanctuary as an aid to the aged and handicapped. This was tabled because of the problems of installation, the great expense, and the hope among many that a new sanctuary would be built soon. Many older members and handicapped people are barred from church attendance by the necessity of climbing steps.

Several members have been aided by the Benevolence Committee to gain entrance into one of our Baptist Homes for the Aging. Ceramics equipment was purchased by the Committee for Hamilton Home but was later sold when plans to secure a teacher failed to materialize.

The Benevolence report for December 1967 through January 1968 was as follows:

Emergency Relief	$65.00
Christmas Food Boxes	37
Supplement to Boxes	$30.00
Wheel Chair	$125.00
Needy Family	$50.00

Clothing to 3 Families	
Fuel Distributed	$165.00
Visits	50

Mr. Carl Kilgo served as chairman of the Benevolence Committee through 1972 with Jerry Briggs as co-chairman. When Mr. Kilgo resigned in 1973, Mr. Briggs became chairman with Mr. Kilgo co-chairman. Mr. Briggs served in 1973 and 1974, during which time the clothes closet was reactivated. In 1973, Misses Mabel and Hazel Wells found suitable storage space, sized the clothing, delivered it to those in need and sent the unused clothing to the Rocky Mount Workshop. In 1974, Mrs. Jeff Batts and the Acteens continued this work.

When Mr. Briggs resigned in 1975, Mr. E.E. Edwards became chairman with Mr. Kilgo still co-chairman. An arrangement was worked out with the bus station whereby stranded and needy passengers could come to the church to receive tickets for meals (up to $2.00) at the nearby Duchess Restaurant. Cards are sent to the known sick and to shut-ins every two months. In hardship cases, enough gas has been supplied to get families home.

The committee now numbers 26 and has a budget of $600 a year, plus individual donations. Mr. Hiram Harris is the 1976 chairman.

The Homebound

It is believed that Dr. W.A. Duncan of New York City first recognized the need for Bible study among those unable to attend Sunday School and inaugurated the Home Department movement in 1881. In 1899 our church added a Home Department to the Sunday School, with Mr. T.M. Arrington as superintendent.

In 1910 the Sunday School Board issued its first "Home Life Magazine". In the beginning, the emphasis was on home Bible study, as a link with the church. This is still true. When the work was expanded beyond the home, the movement was called the Extension Department.

The beginning of the work in our church under the Extension Department is not clear but was probably about 1923. Mrs. E.C. Lucas (formerly Mrs. George Parker) was its first leader. Work was accomplished through a superintendent and volunteer visitors who formed the committee. Following Mrs. Lucas were Mrs. W.C. Temple, Mrs. Grover Robbins, and Mrs. J.A. Delbridge, Sr., who is the present superintendent.

In 1971 the name was changed from Extension Department to Homebound Department. (It had been changed to Extension because the work had been extended to people who worked on Sunday or were otherwise prevented from attending church). The committee visited, gave out church literature, and arranged Bible study groups. When the name changed to Homebound, the work once more concentrated on the homes and the nursing homes.

Presently the Homebound Department has six projects:

1. A prayer service at Guardian Care Nursing Home once a month (the missionary groups have been serving refreshments for this meeting for 16 years).
2. Visitation in the nursing home of Mrs. L.C. Levitte at 815 Branch Street for 17 years.
3. Visitation of Baptists at the nursing home on Tarboro Highway.
4. Visitation of Baptists at Westgate Nursing Home.
5. Sunday School literature furnished to the Rocky Mount Fire Station on George Street.

6. A table prepared in the church honoring a different Homebound member each month.

There is, of course, monthly visitation in the homes of Homebound members to give out church literature, show love and receive their church offerings. Periodical reports are made through the *Outreach.* A typical report follows:

Enrolled ..... 112 Total Contacts..... 132
Workers..... 22 Offering $48.85

At least 50 men and women have been involved in this work since 1923. The committee now (1975) serving is:

Mrs. Delbridge, Sr., Superintendent

Mrs. J.A. Delbridge, Jr., Secretary

Visitors: Mrs. R.M. Chandler, Miss Annie Gaynor, Mrs. Godfrey Giddeon, Miss Mason Ricks, Mrs. Naomi Williams, Mrs. L.Y. Shaw, Mrs. T.W. Robbins, Mrs. Harvey Coley, Mrs. Claude Mayo, Sr., Mrs. Elizabeth Futrell, Mr. Cliff Reynolds, Mr. J.C. Andrews, Miss Hazel Wells, and Mr. and Mrs. A.H. Phillips, Sr.

Silent Training Union—1957 **Inset: Mr. E.E. Mayo**

The Silent Ones

In the spring of 1945, a group of local deaf people felt the need for Bible study, even though few actually belonged to any church or faith. The home of Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Mills at 2513 South Church Street became their meeting place. Some of the first members were:

Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Mills
Mr. and Mrs. Shelton Cartwright
Mr. and Mrs. William Wells
Robert Bulluck
Irving Reynolds
Leonard Aycock, Enfield
Mrs. Estelle Hardee, Nashville
Miss Nannie Humphrey, Farmville
Mr. and Mrs. Shep Roebuck, Hamilton
Mr. and Mrs. Herman Aycock, Fremont
Mr. and Mrs. Otis Upchurch, Castalia
Robert Ethridge, Scotland Neck

Two interested members of other deaf groups, Mr. J.N. Carrol, teacher of a class in Goldsboro, Mr. J.M. Robertson, an active member of the Raleigh Sunday School Class, visited with the Rocky Mount group often to help them get organized.

When the group had grown to an average attendance of 25, they looked for a larger meeting place. Several local churches were approached but failed to respond with aid for this ministry.

One of the silent members, while a customer of Quinn Furniture Company, met Mr. E.E. Mayo, a salesman there, and they became good friends. Mr. Mayo secured the approval of the First Baptist Church for the silent group to meet in our church in a room on the third floor. This was begun in

November 1945. They met at 2:00 P.M. on the second and fourth Sundays. A similar class was held in Fremont on the first and third Sundays. Mr. J.A. Harper was Sunday School Superintendent and Dr. Kincheloe was pastor when this work began.

In the name of the church, Mr. Mayo made the deaf welcome, becoming their ardent supporter and, in return, their well-loved friend. The attendance grew, drawing the silent ones from a radius of forty miles around. Mr. J.C. Mills was the teacher of the first interdenominational Bible class ever taught in our church. Mr. Mayo was instrumental in securing interested people to speak, with Mr. Mills signing the interpretation.

For the next ten years, Mr. Alfred Stancil taught the class. Mr. Clinton Hardee is presently the teacher.

On August 27, 1951 Mr. Mayo, beloved friend and church representative, died of a heart attack. On September 11, 1951 Mr. Alfred Stancil, son-in-law of Mr. Mayo, became the church representative and was present to welcome the group. On November 21, 1951 the sixth anniversary of the class, in a special meeting, the class was named the "Mayo Deaf Bible Class" in memory of Mr. E.E. Mayo. The members of the Mayo family were honored guests and the son, Ed Mayo, presented a picture of his father to the class.

Our pastors have been interested in and supportive of the work with the deaf, attending many special meetings and socials, creating good relations between the Silent and the Hearing. Many young people have learned to sign phrases in order to communicate. Three of the deaf girls have had lovely weddings in the church. It was on one such occasion that Dr. Branch came to the rescue. Due to Sunday traffic and a nearby

patrolman, Jerry Potter was unable to reach the church on time. When the time came, Dr. Branch hurriedly located his ceremony book, remarking to Clinton Hardee, "We can get this couple married!" So, only a few minutes late, Dr. Branch performed the ceremony while Clinton Hardee interpreted, and Jerry Potter observed from the vestibule.

In 1951-1952, Rev. Edsel Jones, representative of the Mission Department of the State Convention, visited the class to offer assistance. Jerry Potter became missionary to the N.C. Deaf in 1952. Then Rev. Neal Peyton came as Associate Missionary to the Deaf. Both have assisted with funerals, weddings, revivals and schools of missions, adding immeasurably to the deaf work in the state.

Our church contributed $300 in 1959 toward the purchase of a plane to facilitate Jerry Potter's work as he travels over the state.

In 1955 Mr. and Mrs. A.L. Stancil organized a Training Union for the Deaf and began to learn the sign language themselves. Mr. Cecil Barnes, a hearing person, began to learn to sign and to help with this ministry. This Silent Union became Standard in October 1957, the only Standard Deaf Union in the Southern Baptist Convention! They held the Standard for three consecutive years. During these years two of the members (of another faith) moved their membership and 17 others came on profession of faith.

On February 9, 1958 Mr. Robert Ethridge wrote to WNCT-TV in Greenville requesting time for a program on which the gospel would be preached in sign language. Thirteen weeks of free time were made available for the "Chapel for the Deaf," in which the local group appeared. The program was discontinued because of the limitations on the missionary's time.

On December 27, 1960 WNCT-TV again offered time with opportunity to tape the services in advance. As "Light Unto My Path," the series was resumed in January, 1961. By 1965, it was being shown on 18 stations in 7 southern states.

When our church made plans for a new educational building, the needs of the deaf were provided for by designating room 200 for their use for Sunday School and Training Union.

Through the years, the deaf have grown more missionary minded as they matured spiritually. They have demonstrated this by sending packages to other areas of need; by traveling to different churches to give programs and help organize Training Unions; by working with the state missionaries and assuming leadership in organizing classes in Roanoke Rapids, Fremont, Greenville, and Wilson; by memorizing parts and presenting the pageant "Breaking of the Bread" for the 1960 Easter Service of the N.C. Deaf given in our church; and by hosting the 32nd annual convention of the N.C. Sunday School Association of the Deaf in 1961, also at First Baptist.

In June 1964, the Mayo Deaf Bible Class became a part of the Sunday School of our church, meeting at 9:40 on Sunday as a class in Adult III Department, with Clinton Hardee as teacher.

In 1967, the class enjoyed dressing in Centennial costumes and visiting the School for the Deaf in Wilson.

One of the outstanding young people to work with the deaf is Miss Sherry Brabham, a former Miss Rocky Mount. She began her deaf work in 1968 as a junior in high school and signs regularly when she is in Rocky Mount on Sunday.

Because of four interpreters—Clinton Hardee, Mary and Alfred Stancil, and Sherry Brabham—our church services are available to the Silent in this area.

On November 18, 1973 the Deaf Bible Class observed its 28th anniversary with an impressive service in which the choir signed the prayer response, Mrs. Stancil interpreted the music, Miss Hilda Mayo recalled the early history of the class, and Rev. Jerry Potter preached the sermon. Following the service, the church hosted a luncheon for the honor guests, during which time a Bible was presented to Mr. Clinton Hardee in appreciation for his years of service.

Kindergarten and Day Care Center

In the fall of 1954, Mrs. R.E. Lee and Mrs. C.D. Braswell organized our first Kindergarten with 30 children enrolled. Dr. Douglas Branch was pastor and James R. Batten was chairman of the Kindergarten Committee.

Classes were held on the first floor of the old Kincheloe parsonage in two rooms heated with oil heaters. The teachers took

Day Care at Lunch

turns coming in early to light the stoves before the children arrived. On rainy days, the old Scout hut behind the church was used for recreation and play period.

When the parsonage was torn down to make room for the new educational building, the Kindergarten moved into the old building behind the sanctuary.

In 1959-1960, Mrs. Ramona Anderson taught first grade, which was then discontinued.

Dr. Branch was very interested in Christian schooling and the new educational building was planned with this in mind. When the building was completed in 1960, the Kindergarten moved into its new quarters.

By March 1962, a committee had been appointed by the deacons to establish a Day Care Nursery School on the first floor of the new facility. The committee was the following: Mrs. H.L. Bell, chairman; Dr. Bob Jones, co-chairman; H.I. Tharrington; Mrs. Harold Gallaspy; Mrs. Ralph Barnes; Miss Hilda Mayo; Mrs. R.E. Lee; James R. Batten; Miss Annie Gaynor; Mrs. Sam Smith; Ex-officio: Rev. Lowell Sodeman, pastor; Dr. Harold Gallaspy, educational director.

The committee, after conducting the necessary investigation, presented their report to the deacons in June 1962, which follows:

A Nursery School would:

1. Be in keeping with Bible teaching to instruct young children in spiritual matters.

2. Fill a gap in our hectic materialistic world left by harried home life and limited public school experience as to Bible truths.

3. Provide religious education during the most formative years of a child's life—2 through 5 years.

4. Be a powerful mission opportunity for our church.
5. Attract young couples with small children to our church.
6. Utilize existing physical equipment.
7. Fill a need in our community, not otherwise met, for a well-managed facility where working mothers may feel that their children are well cared for, loved and wanted.

With a population of over 32,000 Rocky Mount had no licensed Day Nursery. Application was made to the N.C. State Public Welfare Board for a license to operate. Inspections of our plant were made by the Welfare Board, and by the city Sanitation and Fire Departments.

Having met all requirements, a licensed Day Care Center and Kindergarten was opened in September of 1962, with an enrollment of 55 children, ages 2-5. The school week is Monday-Friday, 7:45 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Serving at this time were:

Miss Lillian Harmon, director and teacher;
Mrs. Clarence Jones, Dietician
Mrs. R.E. Lee, kindergarten teacher
Mrs. C.D. Braswell, kindergarten teacher
Mrs. P.C. Coppedge, Day Care teacher
Mrs. Inez Campbell, Day Care teacher
Mrs. L.Y. Shaw, Day Care worker, P.M.
Mrs. Renyard Morgan, Day Care worker, P.M.
Mrs. R.M. Chandler, Day Care worker, P.M.
Mrs. Hiram Harris, Day Care worker, P.M. (summer)

From September 1963 until June 1972 Mrs. Herbert Abernathy served the Day Care Center as dietician.

In 1963, Mrs. E.F. Stussie was part-time coordinator of the Day Care Center, serving in this position until September 1966. The enrollment had grown to 116 children, requiring a

full-time director. Since Mrs. Stussie was unable to give this much time to the schedule, she resigned.

Kindergarten at Play

Mrs. Sam Smith was the first full-time director, beginning September 1, 1966. George Hooks, Jr. served as Chairman of the Kindergarten and Day Care Committee for two years and was succeeded by Dr. R.J. Sheridan for one year.

Mrs. Smith retired in June 1972. She was succeeded by Mrs. Max Dixon in July 1972, with 150 children enrolled.

Since ours was the first licensed Day Care Center in Rocky Mount, it was used many times as an example and for ideas about training workers elsewhere, not only in the immediate area, but in other parts of the state and as far away as Texas!

The Park View Hospital School of Nursing sent their student nurses to work in our Center where they could have direct

contact with the child. Nash Technical Institute and N.C. Wesleyan College also took advantage of the opportunity to learn through our facility. "A little child shall lead them."

With the completion of the Fellowship Building, a new private office was available for the director, Mrs. Dixon; lunches were served in the new dining hall, beginning July 21, 1975; the playgrounds are in the process of being rearranged according to landscape plans; and off-street parking is now available for unloading and pick-up of the children—a new safety precaution.

Mr. Bennett Bunn is the 1975 chairman of the Kindergarten-Day Care Committee of five, while the present faculty numbers 21.

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6.

The War Years

During the war years, the members of our church fellowship participated in various ways:

The Sunday School Department bought bonds. In the name of the trustees, the church bought bonds. These bonds formed the nucleus for our future expansion.

In 1942, a Bible teacher was engaged to teach in the public schools. Her salary was underwritten by several local churches. First Baptist contributed $280 yearly.

In 1943, "The Gleam" was sent to all our servicemen (this is told in detail elsewhere).

In June 1943, the U.S.O. Booth was manned by women from our Woman's Missionary Society. It took $50 to feed the soldiers.

In 1945, the Finance Committee recommended that the church pay $1.00 per man for each of the members serving in the Armed Forces. This money went to the American Red Cross and Dr. Kincheloe personally delivered it.

During this same period, Mrs. John R. Lee, with the help of two friends, gathered together wives of our servicemen not already in Sunday School and sought, through Bible teaching, to meet their special needs. Later, under other leadership, this class grew into a whole department.

During World Wars I and II, an Honor Roll of our Baptist boys in service was erected in the vestibule of the sanctuary so that all who would could lift them up in prayer.

In recent years, during the Vietnamese debacle, a Young Adults Away Department of the Sunday School was begun with Mrs. J.W. Henderson as director and Mrs. Truett Tanner, associate director. This department is concerned with young people in college, working out of town, or serving in the Armed Services. Its purpose is to serve as a continuing link and anchor with the hometown fellowship. The names and addresses of these young people away are published in the *Outreach*; the fellowship is urged to write to them; and the *Outreach* is mailed to each one.

One young woman brought up in our church, Miss Olivia Pitt, graduated with a degree in sociology and went with the American Red Cross to Vietnam. She was stationed in Da Nang as a recreational leader. Miss Pitt, presently stateside, is serving with the Red Cross as a case worker at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia.

"He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still and know that I am God: I will

be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." Psalm 46:9,10.

Missions Committee

In January 1962, the church appointed its first Missions Committee, Mr. John Harper, chairman. After committee members investigated the various areas of need in the vincinity, it was decided that a Bible class for the student nurses at Park View Hospital would be the most fruitful place to begin a new work. Having consulted with and received the approval of the hospital authorities, plans were made to begin a class in the basement of the Nurses' Home on Church Street. At that time, June 1962, there were 20 students, ten of them Baptists.

In the beginning, Mrs. John R. Lee, Missions Committee member, taught the class, quarterlies furnished by the church, until other teachers could be enlisted. Each teacher taught for one month. Meetings were held once a week from 7:00 to 8:00 P.M., opening with a brief fellowship followed by Bible study.

The Missionary Society was asked to furnish light refreshments and the circles accepted this responsibility, each serving for one month. This weekly contact with the nurses strengthened the ties between the church and the hospital staff and kept spiritual values before the nurses. Many attended our church when off duty and also church socials and parties, transportation being furnished.

The last class was held September 19, 1967. When talk of a large new hospital began, Park View Hospital decided to discontinue its School of Nursing. Since they couldn't complete their training, no new students were coming in. The School of Nursing closed in 1969.

In 1965, Mrs. John R. Lee was named chairman of the Mis-

sions Committee. Serving with her were Mrs. J.W. Knowles, Annie Gaynor, Mr. and Mrs. Doug Barnes, W.H. Williams, John R. Lee, Rev. J.R. Everett, J.E. Daughtridge, and Clarence Vassar.

Assignments of various areas in the city were made to again evaluate places of greatest need. The result of his survey led to the following action:

1. Continuance of the student nurses' Bible class.

2. Sunday afternoon visitation, brief devotional, sing-a-long, and refreshment time conducted at the Edgecombe Acres Rest Home, Negro Division. This was scheduled for every 2nd Sunday. Sunday School teachers, classes, and department heads, church musicians, led by Ted Gossett, and young people took part in these Sunday visits. The Negro patients were very appreciative and enjoyment was shared by visitors and visited.

3. Teachers were supplied for an early (before Sunday School) Bible class for boys at the YMCA. Most of these boys were paper carriers. The teachers were Graham Kennedy, Judson Rosser, Don Biggerstaff, and Warren Hewett.

4. For two summers, two YMCA boys were sent to Day Camp with the help of the Men's Chapel Class and members of the committee.

The committee was anxious to begin a work with delinquent boys but was unable to secure the needed sponsors.

A little work with needy individuals was done. Several children at Fannie Gorham School were helped with lunches, shoes, clothing and bed clothing; and one alcoholic woman was helped until she moved out of town.

In 1968, Jeff Batts was named Missions Chairman and led out in starting a Sunday School class for retarded trainable

children. Initially, Mrs. Angie Roberts and Mr. and Mrs. John Pridgen led the class. Later, Mrs. J.D. Winstead, Jr., Hilda Mayo, and a Mr. Harris worked with the small group of children involved. This class not only gave the children spiritual training but let the parents have an opportunity to attend church services.

There have been other workers, Pritchard Ham and Ronnie Smiley among them. The present workers are Mrs. W.C. Marshall and Mr. and Mrs. M.P. Woodard.

Mr. Batts sought to lead our church to cooperate with other local churches in beginning and sustaining a Day Care Center for working mothers in the West End Terrace area. For some reason, our church chose not to participate initially. However, beginning in 1974, we have contributed $600 yearly to this project.

The Christ Child Day Care Center is located at 1101 Aycock Street and is fully licensed. Mrs. Gordan Blanchard is the director. Working mothers pay for child care on a sliding scale, according to income and the number of family members. The children come from the housing project and trailer parks, many from broken homes.

Five churches, the J.C.s, the J.C.ettes, and the Intermediate Woman's Club are supportive with money, staple and canned goods, paper goods, and volunteer services.

Mr. Billy Kilgo, 1975 Missions chairman, is allowed $1000 by the church budget for the year's work. It is being spent as follows:

$200 a year to the Little League Baseball team

$600 a year to the Christ Child Day Care Center

$75 a year to the Small Fry YMCA Baseball Team

$125 for the Bus Ministry for Vacation Bible School

CHAPTER VII

WE REMEMBER TO COMMUNICATE GOOD WILL AND GOOD NEWS

"That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." I Timothy 6:18.

Libraries

Between 1880 and 1976 we have had three church libraries! As incredible as it seems, the tiny Rocky Mount Baptist Church, while struggling for its very existence, was concerned with the acquisition of good literature for its members.

Our report to the Tar River Association for September 1887 has the following listing for the Sunday School: "No. of volumes in library . . . . 36."

In 1888, $39 was given to the Sunday School library which had grown to 175 volumes. By October 1, 1891 the Associa-

tional Report shows 267 volumes. But the record fails to reveal what became of this gallant beginning. Perhaps it perished for lack of funds. Known early librarians were Miss Annie Reams, Archie Nunn, and W.W. Avera in 1898.

The second library in our church, now called the First Baptist Church, was organized in the late 1940's with $200 given by the Circles of the Woman's Missionary Society. The new educational wing had been completed and the rather large stair landing was selected as the best available space. With approximately 300 books, this attractive library nook was named the Estella Riley Finch Memorial Library in memory of Mrs. H.M. Finch. This remarkable woman had been president of the Missionary Society for 15 years, a beloved and indefatigable worker. Few women have equaled her in Bible teaching, leadership, and compassionate outreach to the poor, the sick, the Negro, the lawbreaker.

The Estella Riley Finch Library was manned by volunteers until 1954 when Mrs. Maude Clark Bishop and Miss Myrtie Cox were elected by the church as librarians.

In 1960, when the new educational building was completed, 927 books were moved to the well-planned new facility. For the most part, the new library was furnished by memorial gifts. It's not known why the memorial name was not retained, but this library became known as the First Baptist Church Library.

Mrs. Bishop and Miss Cox labored faithfully to purchase, catalogue, and care for the books, supplies, and monies involved. Miss Nancy Hooks began working as assistant in 1960 and remains dedicated to the work.

In 1968, at the death of Mrs. Bishop, Miss Emily Williams became assistant to Miss Cox. When Miss Cox resigned in

December of 1970, Miss Williams was elected head librarian while Miss Cox and Miss Nancy Hooks still served on the Library Committee. Besides those named above, other assistants to the librarian are Miss Dixie Middleton, Mrs. Carol Rose, Mrs. Virgie Watson, and Mr. Grant Mangum, all volunteers.

The library has over 2000 books and is admirably equipped. Its closet houses our visual aids, screens, projectors, films, record player, slides, and tapes. The 1976 church budget includes $200 for operating expenses, audio-visuals, and the purchase of books. This is augmented by the memorial gifts. Mrs. Betty Chandler is chairman of the Library Committee of eight. One of their projects (1975) is obtaining and placing in the library pictures of as many of our pastors as possible.

The library does need more readers. Will you be one?

Church Publications

As far as is known, our first church paper was published in 1901 by the pastor, Rev. Walter N. Johnson. Three hundred copies of "Our Church" came off the press April 19, 1901. The church minutes state that "Our Church" was to be published weekly but, since there is no further mention of it, it must have been of short duration.

In 1913, when the sanctuary was dedicated, bulletins similar to our present ones were used. However, worship bulletins were probably in use much earlier.

In 1943, a second church paper called "The Gleam" was published especially for the men in service. The editor-in-chief was Reece Thomas; the managing editor, Maxine Parker; the circulation managers, Irma Wilkins and Ruby Walker. The reporters were: Dorothy Batchelor, Ruth Mayo, Estelle T.

Shearin, Lila Williams, Betty Nethercutt, Catherine Pitt, Jessie M. Anderson, and Mrs. W.D. Farmer, church secretary. These young women produced and mailed "The Gleam" to each of our men in service during World War II and also the church members at home.

During Dr. Cherry's pastorate, and again in Dr. Higdon's pastorate, the Pictorial Church Directories of America prepared a directory of our church members at no cost to the church. This was financed by the sale of family and individual portraits.

Our third church paper was initiated by Dr. Harold T. Gallaspy, educational director. The *Outreach* was first published in October 1961. It still continues under the same name. In the opinion of this writer, this means of communication in a large church is essential. We should use it to the maximum.

Other publications have been the Forward Program of Church Finance, begun in 1958; reports of the financial secretary; promotional material; the book of Church Committees, published yearly; and the Missionary Society Yearbooks.

The *Evening Telegram*

For years our church activities have been listed in the *Evening Telegram* and special events have been fully publicized. The paper has been most generous in its church coverage, for which we are very grateful.

Radio

Broadcasting the morning worship services began in April 1935 over Station WEED. In 1960, the early morning service

was taped and played the following Sunday at ten o'clock over WEED. When the early service was eliminated, the eleven o'clock service was taped and played back in the same manner. This ministry is especially helpful to the sick, aged, and homebound.

It was estimated in 1960 that approximately 12,000 people were reached by this broadcast. The estimate jumped from 18,000 up to 24,000 in 1974.

Book Store

The First Baptist Book Store began as an idea in the mind of Rev. Ronald Higdon. He realized the importance of providing a non-profit resource for the purchase of classic and current religious books at a discount.

This idea was presented to the church in January 1972. The book store opened in April 1972 in the church office. Hundreds of books were sold, yet the store was phased out in 1974.

Through the ministry of the book store, the church was seeking to impart its conviction that Christ was serious when he said ". . . you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your *mind,* and with all your strength."

The Christian Characters (Drama Department)

Drama is the art of expression by action. Its origin is as ancient as Man himself, for he has long expressed himself through story-telling accompanied by gestures and facial movements.

Greek drama, the forerunner of modern drama, is believed to have developed from dithyrambs or hymns sung in honor of Dionysus, god of wine, by a chorus dressed as satyrs. This form of entertainment became so popular that, when the Church had grown in power, the plays were produced under the control of the Church itself. They were part of the actual liturgy—so were called mystery plays or ministry plays, extensions of short dramatic scenes, such as the uncovering of an empty tomb on Easter Day and the representation of the manger at Bethlehem at Christmas, which was introduced into the Mass itself.

It will be remembered that in Bible days, even David, the King, danced with joy before the Lord.

In our church, through all the years, various groups and organizations have presented tableaus, pageants, playlets, and skits. Often the Christmas or Easter music has been supplemented by tableaus. But there was no regular organized effort to develop local religious drama.

In 1969, in the place of Vacation Bible School for young people, Mrs. Ruth Bell conceived the idea of having a drama workshop. It was largely attended, 35 or 40 young people coming each night. A dramatic presentation of the history of our church, "The Prophecy of the Pipes," was the culmination of this experiment.

The presentation generated sufficient interest in drama to result in the formation of a drama group for young people. They called themselves "The Christian Characters." With Mr. Bill Nelms named director, the new drama department was included in the church budget. Individuals also contributed to the new youth endeavor.

The eight youths in the original group have grown to twenty,

ranging in age from 13 to 19 years. Nine dramas have been produced, with the expectation of producing four each year.

On June 1, 1975 Mr. Nelms directed adults in a skit, "1880-Revisited," prepared by Mrs. John R. Lee in honor of our church's 95th birthday.

The creed and purpose of the Christian Characters follow:

"We believe that drama in the church offers one of the best opportunities to participate in worship and to give of our talents. Our plays are plays with purpose. We are not in the church to entertain; we are here to challenge. We are young people who seek to point the way to Christ by the use of Christian Drama. We believe that God will bless our efforts. We do not seek the praise of men, but seek to bring praise to God."

Our Affiliations

Our church was organized June 1, 1880 under the auspices and with the help of the Tar River Association as represented by Mr. Noah Biggs.

On Thursday, October 7, 1880, the Tar River Baptist Association, in its annual meeting with the Peach Tree Baptist Church of Nash County, took the following action:

"The following churches petitioned for membership in this body: Aurelian Springs, Roanoke, Warren Plains, Ephesus, and Rocky Mount. Elders Mundy, Vann, and Pitchford were appointed a committee to examine the Articles of Faith of these churches and report."

On Friday the Associational clerk records the following:

"The committee on new churches reported, recommending the admission of them all. The report was adopted and the right hand of fellowship extended to the delegates by the moderator on behalf of the Association."

This interesting paragraph is recorded on page six of the 1880 Tar River minutes: "Elder Carter rejoiced to get back home among North Carolina Baptists. This would soon be the banner state of the South in missions. He had been laboring for years in the rich blue-grass region of Kentucky where the population was nearly all Baptists, but the long leaf pine, tarheel Baptists of North Carolina gave twice as much for missions. He came back here to work and prayed God to prosper our efforts."

In 1880, the Tar River Association listed 46 churches, with 4478 members . . . . 3670 white and 808 colored. In 1906, there were 100 churches and 11,606 members. The territory was large, extending from the Chowan to the Eastern and the Cape Fear Associations.

When the Tar River Association was divided and the Roanoke Association was formed in 1907, there were 49 churches and 4302 members in the new association—including our church, which hosted the first annual meeting of the Roanoke Association on October 13, 1907. The Tar River Association retained 50 churches and 6378 members.

In 1955, the Roanoke Association was divided into the South Roanoke and the North Roanoke Associations. The First Baptist Church of Rocky Mount was a charter member of the North Roanoke Association.

From non-existent gifts, our church became the largest giver in the Association. At present, several churches are challenging this record and sometimes exceed it. In the past, our church has been called "The Sleeping Giant" in the Association but, with God's help and deeper consecration, our church can reach its full potential and become "A Light Set Upon A Hill."

Though we are an autonomous body of baptized believers, we have chosen to cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention and the North Carolina Baptist State Convention. It is good for us to remember that the Conventions have no authority over us except as we permit it. We are subject to no hierarchy, only the authority of God.

Several of our pastors and a few of our members have been privileged to attend the Baptist World Alliance, but we have no direct connection with this body.

Publications which our church subscribes to include *Charity and Children, Church and State, Biblical Recorder,* and *POAU (Protestants and Other Americans United).*

The American Bible Society has been especially dear to our members. It has long been included in our budget. Individual members also make private contributions to this important work.

Many of our members have contributed to the Howard Memorial Fund started by the beloved Dr. Charles Howard to aid needy students to remain in college. Many outstanding foreign students have been helped by this fund and returned to their native lands to give Christian witness through their leadership.

Scouting

It is believed that Scouting got its start in our church in 1917, but there are no records to substantiate this. It is thought that Troop #2 was organized in that year but soon faded away because of World War I.

The next Scout Troop was started in 1925 or 1926. Edgar Joyner was the Scoutmaster. Known members of the troop

were: James Moore, Tom Coleman, William Coleman, and Hatcher Kincheloe. Mainly through the efforts of Mr. Tom Coleman, the troop had a hut on Medock Mountain. He secured the building materials, sent them to the site on his coal trucks and got D.J. Rose and Son to send two carpenters to build the hut. The carpenters stayed four days until the work was completed. Mr. Coleman also secured donations from several individuals to help with troop activities. This troop remained active until 1929 or 1930 when the "Great Depression" seemingly quelled our interest in scouting.

In 1936, under the leadership of W.B. (Captain Billy) Middleton, the next troop to be sponsored by our church was organized. Troop #6 met on the third floor of the old educational building. It lasted only two years. To quote Captain Billy, "It was doomed from the start as the church was just not ready to support a scout troop."

This ended scouting in our church until September 18, 1951 when Dr. Kincheloe signed an application for a troop charter to Boy Scouts of America, the troop to be sponsored by our church. The Scout Committee was composed of Marvin A. Barnes, chairman; J.C. Whaley; Eslie R. Phillips; John Scott, Jr.; Herman S. Merrell; John H. Bland; and Fred A. Parker. The Charter was issued and Troop #239 became the First Baptist Church Scout Troop on October 1, 1951.

Troop #239 had 16 charter members, all but one having transferred from Cub Pack #38, also sponsored by our church. This made a troop of 15 Tenderfoot Scouts and one Second Class Scout who had transferred from Troop #113. John H. Bland was the troop's first Scoutmaster, with Fred A. Parker as the Assistant Scoutmaster. The charter members were: Keith Abbott, Jr.; John H. Bland, Jr.; Bill Hudson;

Russell Lancaster; L.M. McLean, Jr.; Mitchell McKinney; Adrain Turner; Stanley Vaughan; Eddie Wilhalf; Mitchell Collins; Haywood Edmondson; Andy Morgan; Kenneth Tucker; Willard Williams; Bill Stancil; and William T. Mallison, Jr.

During the first year, the troop grew from 16 to 21. In the second year, they had 27 members. Two additional Assistant Scoutmasters were named: Horace H. Griffin and Robert E. Self. The troop continued to grow, and in 1956 W.L. (Red) Marshall was made the new Scoutmaster, with Robert C. Britt additional Assistant Scoutmaster.

In 1956-1960, Cub Pack #239 was sponsored by our church. There were 14 dens, each with a den mother and a group of 5 to 8 boys, aged 8-11. During its greatest growth, this pack had 90 boys on roll. The den mothers' names are not available, but the Cub Master was Cecil W. Barnes; the Assistant Cub Master, P.F. O'Keef; and the Webelo Leaders were Jack Bailey and James Thompson.

The years 1957-1959 saw the membership increase to 45 Scouts and 10 Explorers. In 1960, Joseph S. Cavalier was named Assistant Scoutmaster. During this same year, the annual expiration date of Charter was changed from October to February.

In 1962, J.D. Baker became the third Scoutmaster of Troop #239. His assistants were Stanley Vaughan, Jimmy Becknell, John Sturgess, and Stan Cavalier. The members dropped to 36 in 1962 but reached 51 by the end of 1963. In 1964, Johnny Marshall became Assistant Scoutmaster and in the following year the membership reached the highest level ever—53.

After 1965, the troop showed a steady decline until it hit a low of 21 in 1970. In 1971, the Scouts numbered 30 and grew

to 36 in 1972. In this year, the fourth Scoutmaster, Lelon Mitchell, was appointed. His assistants were Ollie Lamm, Gene Viverette, and Page Wood. By February of 1973, the membership reached a low of 18 and a new Scoutmaster, Johnny Marshall, was appointed. His assistants were Davis Gardner and Ollie Lamm. Within two months, 17 new Scouts had been added, bringing the total to 35. Under the enthusiastic leadership of the new Scoutmaster, the troop grew strong and active.

In 1974, Billy Edgerton became Scoutmaster. During the summer of 1976, he took six of our Scouts to the Philmont Scout Ranch at Cimmarron, New Mexico.

Troop #239 has piled up many accomplishments through the years. Among them are the following: 18 Eagle Scouts; 3 God and Country Awards; 1 Silver Beaver Award; Blue Ribbon Awards and other citations at Camporees; Advancement Award, given by the Kiwanis Club, each year except one.

Scouts earning the God and Country Award were: Theodore D. Manos, Jimmy Delbridge, and Gene Viverette.

Members of our church should be proud of Troop #239 and appreciate the dedicated work of its leaders. Especially is tribute due to "Captain Billy" W.B. Middleton who has been a driving force behind our Scout work since 1936.

"Bucks for Boys"

In 1961, during Mr. Sodeman's pastorate, the church gave $99.70 for the cause "Bucks for Boys." Mr. Sodeman also led the church in supporting the Gideon Bible Society.

Special Gifts

To honor Dr. Kincheloe on his thirtieth anniversary with us, the church gave him a love gift of $1000.

By October 1951, the church had given to Wake Forest University a total of $10,488.

Richard T. Fountain School

The First Baptist Church played an important part in the rehabilitation of youth at the Eastern Carolina Training School from its beginning in 1926. Dr. Kincheloe, our pastor at the time, kept bee hives at the school and was in constant touch with the boys. Students were carried in to the various churches for worship services by bus, and often families invited them into their homes. Many boys chose to come to our church. During Dr. Branch's pastorate, many were baptized. One Sunday evening, Dr. Branch baptized about 30 boys. One of the boys became a minister. Years later, the Rev. Carson Blanton, head of the interdenominational Union Mission in Roanoke Rapids, N.C., while addressing the Florence Avera Arrington Missionary Society, asked "How many of you were in this church in 1930 when I was baptized with a group of students from Eastern Carolina Training School?"

Between 1926 and 1970, the Woman's Missionary Society, various Sunday School classes (including the Young People's departments), and the Youth Choirs visited the school to give religious and musical programs, serve refreshments, and show they cared. Where dress clothes were needed, they were provided, and other physical and spiritual needs were met which contributed to rehabilitation.

Students were encouraged to become members of a church

in Rocky Mount because most of them were from non-church families and backgrounds. It was hoped that when a boy returned home, if he aligned himself with Christian people, his rehabilitation would be permanent—his life and soul given to God.

After some years, the Training School's name was changed to the Richard T. Fountain School.

N.C. Wesleyan College

When N.C. Wesleyan College opened in Rocky Mount, our church collaborated with other downtown churches in paying for a chartered bus to bring the students in to worship services on Sunday.

Since there were about a dozen foreign students enrolled, a definite attempt was made to win their friendship in the hope of presenting Christ. One of the mission action groups of the Woman's Missionary Union invited the International students to a tea, a reception, and a spaghetti supper in different Baptist homes. Transportation was provided both ways and ten students accepted the invitations, but only three or four came. After a year of failure, this project was given up because the students seemed disinterested.

However, Mrs. Charles M. Harrison who teaches at Wesleyan is an excellent liaison between our church and the students. She and Mr. Harrison are leading a Sunday School class for college-age students in Adult I and are meeting with some success.

Christmas Parade

One year during the early 1950's, the spirit of revival and

compulsion to put Christ back into Christmas led several local churches to prepare floats for the annual Christmas parade. Our church float presented the manger scene, with Mrs. Irma Wilkins representing the exquisite Virgin Mother dressed in blue and white.

Since the parade was held at night, the sense of mystery and awe were greatly enhanced and Christ, for this once, received acclamation equal to that of Saint Nicholas.

Perhaps repeat performances of such Bible scenes by the churches could help turn the tide away from greed at Christmas . . . . toward God, and his Gift of Love.

CHAPTER VIII

WE REMEMBER THOSE WHO KEEP US VIABLE

"I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Psalm 84:10b.

In 1880, the pastor was the only one receiving a salary, all other necessary work being done by willing lay volunteers. The church report to the Tar River Association for October 7, 1888 mentions "Church expenses—Sexton's hire—$45.00." This was for the year!

The names of these early sextons are now unknown with one exception. In February 1891, Charles Malvier was hired at $2.00 per month. During Dr. Kincheloe's pastorate, Ed Young came to be our janitor. Ed began working in 1931 and retired in 1962. For 1482 consecutive Sundays he never missed a Sunday at work. Of course, he had other days off. Ed was written up in *Biblical Recorder* and honored with an Ed

Young Day. His service extended through three pastorates—Dr. Kincheloe's, Dr. Branch's, and Mr. Sodeman's.

Ed is alone now after having lost two wives and having suffered a stroke but, at 83, he's still able to be self-sustaining.

The familiar sound of Dr. Kincheloe's voice calling Ed still echoes in the memory of the older members of the church.

Robert Wiggins, Elijah Boddie, and Alexander Thorne succeeded Ed Young. Alexander is still serving, but Robert, after a long hospitalization and leg amputation, could no longer work. During his trying illness, frequent love offerings were sent to Robert and his salary continued for months. He was replaced by Alfred Graham. Due to changes in terminology, our sextons became janitors, and they are now custodians.

The Day Care Center and Wednesday night suppers necessitated more workers to maintain the upkeep of our enlarged facilities. Mrs. Jean Silver, Mrs. Jean Sumlin, Mrs. Ruth Fox, and Mrs. Lizzie Powell have served as maids. Mrs. Mattie Lewis now serves as kitchen maid and Mrs. Ruby Grant as cleaning maid.

Our first full-time office staff member came to us in 1926. Miss Ida Ballance was a M.R.E. graduate of Carver School of Missions, Louisville. She came expecting to serve as educational director but, when met at the train, was informed by the deacons that she would be church secretary. Though disappointed, she found comfort in her work and in the warm friendships that developed. She especially loved working with the Vacation Bible School.

In 1928, Miss Ballance resigned to marry Mr. Dred Darden and went to live in Williamston, N.C. She is a widow now.

Mrs. W.C. Farmer succeeded Miss Ballance in 1929, serving during most of Dr. Kincheloe's long pastorate. She was

well known for her loyalty to both pastor and church. Mattie was church secretary and financial secretary as well as the church's memory bank! At retirement, Mrs. Farmer sold her home and moved out of town, but returned to visit each year. After months of being confined to a nursing home in Augusta, Georgia, Mrs. Farmer died in August 1976.

One of our own girls, Miss Janice Murchison, was church secretary in 1954.

Miss Faye Cummins came as church secretary in 1955. A talented artist, she used her abilities freely for poster work, so contributed greatly to mission and prayer promotion. Faye married Mr. Thomas Weeks and moved to Lumberton, N.C.

Miss Barbara Winstead served in 1958 as church secretary and secretary to Dr. Branch.

Mrs. Godfrey Giddeons (Mary June) began working in our church in 1959. She began by doing special work connected with our building fund drive and census. In 1960 she worked part-time as financial secretary. She went to full-time employment in 1962, with responsibility for the Sunday School records. Gradually more secretarial work was added, until she was filling the educational secretary's position. Mary June resigned in 1971. Though retired, she is constantly called on to "help out" as needed.

Mrs. Edward F. Stussie (Elsie) served as church secretary for approximately a year while Mrs. Giddeons was financial secretary. Then she became part-time Coordinator of the Day Care Center. When the Day Care required a full-time administrator, Elsie resigned to teach in the Center during 1967 and 1968.

Mrs. Rose Goodwin was church secretary in 1960 and 1961. She passed away a few years ago.

Judy Wood served as church secretary in 1961-1962.

Mrs. Graham Herring served as church secretary and secretary to Dr. Higdon.

Mrs. Elbert Coley served as church secretary from September 1961 until November 1, 1964, when she was Dr. Cherry's secretary. She was also secretary to Dr. Higdon and Dr. Cave until she again served as church secretary. In November 1975, Mary retired for health reasons. She has been devotedly faithful through the years.

Mrs. Clifton Pierce served as educational secretary during Mr. Higdon's tenure. Others known to have served in this capacity are Mrs. Betty Varnell, Mrs. Mary Felton, and Miss Ruth Dixon. There may be others whose names are not available.

Mrs. Pat Lynch has worked as pastor's and financial secretary. Mrs. J. Robert Lee also served as secretary to Mr. Higdon until she moved, when Mrs. Coley filled this vacancy until she became church secretary.

Presently, Mrs. Donald G. Joyner is secretary to Dr. Cave.

Mrs. George Boulden served part-time as church secretary from November 1975 until April 1976. Miss Mary Helen Batten assumed this work in May 1976.

Mrs. Foy Hedgepeth has been financial secretary; also, Mrs. Phyllis Watson in 1962. Mrs. C.R. Shields, among others, served for a while until Mrs. Nancy Robertson came as full-time financial secretary in November 1965. Nancy is still serving efficiently and well.

In 1956, Mrs. W.C. Temple was named church hostess. Alice had charge of church suppers, special events involving food service, wedding receptions, etc. She supervised the cleaning of the buildings and was part of the Welcoming Com-

mittee on Sunday. She knew all the members and visited wherever needed. She became known as the unofficial "Good Will Ambassador" of the First Baptist Church. A childless widow, the church was her family, and she gave herself to it. Her death, while greatly mourned, turned into a spiritual triumph.

When the new fellowship hall was completed, the lovely small meeting room adjacent to the hall was appropriately named the "Alice Temple Room."

When Alice was hospitalized with a heart attack and underwent a long recuperation, Mrs. J.W. Knowles became church hostess, supervising the cleaning and meal preparation. Though now retired, Ethel has given years of devoted service to the church she loves.

Each hostess was assisted by selected good cooks who freely gave their services to this demanding work. Among them were: Mrs. W.E. King, Mrs. P.C. Zimmerman, Mrs. Roy Daughtridge, Mrs. Z.H. Wheeless, Mrs. Eugene Braxton, Mrs. Nell Winstead, and Mrs. J.M. Turner.

Later, Mrs. Dorothy Lewis served as Dietician for a short time and was followed by Mrs. Donnie Denton, who is now serving as Dietician and Cleaning Supervisor.

Of all the work necessary to operate a big church on a viable basis, cooking is perhaps the work which receives the least commendation. However, without the willing hands of the good cooks, much of the other work of the church would suffer. Day Care, Kindergarten, Youth Choir, Missionary youth organizations, Fellowship suppers, and many other occasions would quickly feel the difference. This is our salute to our good cooks.

When our physical plant became more complicated, it was

decided to engage one of our members as a maintenance engineer. Mr. L.Y. Shaw was well qualified for this work and served at a minimum salary, beginning in 1959 or 1960.

Mr. Lyman Hoggard succeeded Mr. Shaw, serving well for a number of years.

We no longer have a maintenance engineer, though one is needed. We do have a Building Maintenance Committee chaired by Mr. C.E. Vick, a retired civil engineer. This committee is responsible for making regular and frequent inspections of our whole church plant and for minor or emergency repairs.

Much of the work of the church is delegated to the leadership of 30 committees, excepting the Sunday School and Missionary groups. Each committee is of vital importance, some more pleasant than others.

One such committee is the flower committee. Tribute should be paid to those men and women who have, for years, contributed their flowers, time, and arranging talents for church services, mission study meals, church banquets, weddings, all kinds of church parties, and so forth. They have added beauty to our countless Baptist meetings!

Another group which smooths out difficulties and adds grace and dignity to our worship services is the ushers. These men represent our church to members and strangers. When they function efficiently and with suitable dignity, they contribute to the worshipful atmosphere, extend friendship, and stand ready to cope with any emergency.

Two of our members have had a special interest in our ushers. Mr. and Mrs. A.L. Brandon furnished flowers for their lapels and did much to boost morale. They also furnished cushions for the pews in the balcony. The church now supplies

special identification for the ushers' breast pockets.

We see that the work of the church is so great and varied that anyone who loves the Lord can find a way to serve him. We need only to look into our heart and at our church with a perceptive eye.

CHAPTER IX

WE REMEMBER TO BUILD

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Psalm 127:1a.

Our First Church and Parsonage

It has already been noted that the first wooden church structure was completed in 1881 and that the arrival of our first resident pastor in 1884 made it necessary to build a "study"—a one-room house next to the church, facing Church Street. Later, with the opening of Western Avenue, the "study" was moved back of the church, facing Western, and became the nucleus of the parsonage, rooms being added as needed. After some years, this original parsonage was sold and removed to 417 Sunset Avenue.

The Ladies' Aid Society was largely responsible for raising

The Original Church House

the necessary money to finance the above "study" and build a new parsonage. One of their projects for doing so was called "The War of the Roses." In 1909, to spark enthusiasm and lively rivalry, the Society chose two leaders and divided into two groups, the White Roses and the Red Roses. Oyster stews, ice cream suppers, cake and pie sales, rummage sales, brunswick stews, booths at fairs, catered meals for clubs, anything to raise money for their cause motivated these women to work and win.

And win they did! But the rivalry got out of hand, and the residue of jealousy and bitterness required some time to dissipate. These devoted women continued their work unabated, however, until Dr. Livingston Johnson led the church toward the concept of tithing, as opposed to other means of raising money for the church. Though it was then and is still acceptable to some to raise money for God's cause by such means, Dr. Johnson was firmly opposed to it. His leadership in this crucial matter was a giant step forward, for the church began to trust God more and tithe. But it was not until Dr. Kincheloe's pastorate that this practice was entirely eliminated.

The North Rocky Mount Church

In 1895, the North Rocky Mount Baptist Church was organized with 11 charter members. It was our first spiritual child and grew out of a mission Sunday School sponsored by our church and encouraged by our pastor, Rev. James K. Howell.

Calvary Baptist Church

Our next spiritual offspring was the Calvary Baptist Church, now located at 820 Nashville Road. In 1905, a mission point was established in the community on the western edge of Rocky Mount, called Williford Town. Rev. Braxton Craig—and later Dr. I.M. Mercer—conducted services in a three-room school house on Nashville Road. The Sunday School teachers were volunteers from our church who taught on Sunday afternoons. A few years later, Dr. Mercer, helped by his friend, Elder Williford, the Primitive Baptist minister who gave the land, and Mr. Ed Shearin, who gave the timber for

building, formally organized Calvary Church with 11 charter members. This was in 1909. Shortly thereafter, the auditorium and two small Sunday School rooms were built. Elder M.B. Williford was invited to preach the opening sermon for the dedication service.

At the same time Dr. Mercer was supervising the plans and construction of Calvary, he was deeply involved in making plans for our own present sanctuary and helping Arlington Street Church get organized and built.

Arlington Street Baptist Church

Braxton Craig, as at Calvary, had begun a mission Sunday School at "Gibson Hill," as it was then called. Members of our church worked in the Sunday afternoon Sunday School which began February 1, 1907. The church was constituted March 10, 1907. When the lot at the present site was purchased, Ed Shearin and George L. Parker, Sr. of our church were made trustees. The church house cost $1700 and the lot $400. Arlington Street received help from our church and the State Mission Board. Rev. Hight C. Moore preached the first sermon and Elder G.L. Merrell was called as the first pastor. Under the leadership of Tom Avera of our church, funds were raised to liquidate the Arlington Street mortgage.

First Baptist Sanctuary

On October 28, 1911 the Rocky Mount paper, *The Morning Telegram,* carried a picture of the proposed new sanctuary and an article written by Dr. I.M. Mercer. It states that "the building will be of so-called Colonial architecture, but in reality

The Sanctuary under construction—1912

more like a Greek temple, and will care for the needs of the congregation for years to come." The church was designed by J.M. McMichael of Charlotte and contracted to J.D. Grandy, also of Charlotte.

The portico was to feature Corinthian columns, the house to be built of brick with Indiana gray limestone trimming and slate roof. The brick were to be of a special kind of shale known as "tapistry" or "velvet" brick made in Ohio and to be laid in the "Flemish Bond Style."

The new sanctuary was to be ready for occupancy by August 1912 but was not completed until fall. The latter part of Chapter I tells of the joyful celebration which took place at the dedication in March 1913.

Sunset Avenue Baptist Church

Johnson Tabernacle was organized March 12, 1926, with a charter membership of 38. Rev. B.A. Long was called as part-time pastor. This church requested no help from our church but received our good will. One of our church members, Rev. E.C. Sexton, became a pastor there. The name of this church has been changed to Sunset Avenue Baptist Church.

Union Baptist Church

In January 1930, Union Baptist Church was constituted. It was located in the Methodist "Bulluck" building on the west side of Route 97. For reasons not presently known, the doors were locked as a result of some friction. When the few members were unable to hold the meeting inside, car lights were turned on and the meeting proceeded in the church yard. Then a small dwelling on the east side of Route 97 was acquired. Rev. R.J. Works, a member of our church, was pastor at this time.

As was usual, this church began with Sunday afternoon Sunday School meetings. Among the First Baptist members who led and taught were Mr. Edwin J. Meeks, Mr. J.A. Harper, Mrs. H.M. Finch, Mrs. R.J. Works, Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Middleton.

Rev. Ralph Jones was the first full-time pastor. Mr. Eftna Dawes and Mr. J.H. Luper were deacons and Mrs. Mamie Davis, deaconess. Our Rev. E.C. Sexton served as one of their pastors.

Proctor's Chapel

According to the minutes recorded by J.L. Coley, acting clerk, 8 men and 7 women met on July 2, 1925 to organize a missionary Baptist church in the Juvenile School House in Edgecombe County. The church was called the Juvenile Baptist Church, and Rev. J.L. Coley was called as pastor. The last minutes for this Juvenile Church were recorded May 13, 1928. The church remained inactive from 1928 until 1938.

Prayer services and Sunday School were begun in 1935, with the assistance of Mr. E.J. Meeks, Mr. J.A. Harper, and Mr. B.F. Proctor of our church, at the Pleasant Hill Club House. When this arrangement proved unsatisfactory, Mr. Charles Proctor secured a church located on his property. A census revealed that 350 people in the community were interested in organizing a mission Baptist Sunday School. Mr. Charles Proctor deeded the property to the church, which was named for him—Proctor's Chapel. This church was constituted June 12, 1938. The first pastor was A.L. Pollock, and the first Sunday School superintendent was B.F. Proctor, former member of our church. The new church began with six deacons and twenty charter members.

First Baptist Educational Wing

Meanwhile our church had recognized a pressing need for more Sunday School rooms. As a result, plans were implemented to meet the need through an educational wing attached at the rear of the south side of our main building. It was completed in 1941 and quickly filled to capacity.

Oakdale Baptist Church

According to the history of Oakdale Baptist Church on Tarboro Highway, it was the outgrowth of cottage prayer meetings and a community Sunday School. The Sunday School was organized April 2, 1939 in an old store building and later moved to a borrowed pack house belonging to the late L.P. Ezzell. His pack house was on the lot which the church now occupies. Mr. Ezzell sold the lot to the church soon after the church organized, then returned the purchase price to be used in the building fund.

Dr. J.W. Kincheloe made an inspiring address two weeks before the church was organized, giving important suggestions as to forming the new church. The church was constituted in the pack house on June 20, 1943 with 40 charter members. Mr. A.A. Shearin of First Church was the first Sunday School superintendent. Rev. G.N. Cowan, retired member of First Church, was helpful and interested in this work also.

West Edgecombe Baptist Church

In January 1940, as a result of the efforts of Mr. B.F. Proctor and Mr. Robert W. Lancaster, a Sunday School was started on the Pinetops Highway near West Edgecombe School, with Mr. Proctor as superintendent. The church was constituted October 1, 1944 with 40 charter members. George W. Proctor was elected church clerk and Rev. D.M. Singletary called as first regular pastor. The present building was erected in June 1946. We gave our blessing and good will to this church also.

Southside Baptist Church

Jackson Grove Mission Sunday School was organized May 15, 1938 by a mission committee appointed by the Nash County Sunday School Association. The committee was chaired by E.J. Meeks, serving with B.F. Proctor and J.A. Harper.

They began meeting in a little cottage belonging to Mr. T.A. Jackson, hence the name of Jackson Grove. In November 1938, the school moved to a garage building on South Church Street owned by Mrs. N.F. English. Then in 1943, the School bought the Sea Level Lodge at 2616 South Church Street.

On August 20, 1944 the Sunday School met with a council of local preachers and constituted the new church with 22 charter members. Rev. L.M. Woolweaver was called as first pastor; Mrs. Curtis R. Todd and Mrs. R.B. Dawes were elected church clerk and secretary-treasurer, respectively. J.J. Barnhill and Curtis R. Todd were the first deacons. With the formal organization completed, it was decided to change the name to Southside Baptist Church.

Our beloved Rev. G.N. Cowan served as interim pastor in the beginning. Also, early in their building program when the finances ran out, First Baptist was asked to help. We financed the cost of the roof and enclosing the building so the members could continue with their work. Mr. W.B. Middleton was involved with the first Scout troop at Southside.

First Baptist Sunset Avenue Pastorium

On August 22, 1949 the house and lot at 1000 Sunset Avenue was purchased by First Baptist for a pastorium. The

purchase price was $14,000. This was the home of Dr. Kincheloe until his death, after which it was sold.

Kincheloe Memorial Chapel

First Baptist Chapel

Under the enthusiastic leadership of W.A. Bulluck, plans were inaugurated to build a small chapel next to the sanctuary, facing Church Street. The structure was to be somewhat similar to the sanctuary, but smaller, with a seating capacity of 150.

Dedicated October 26, 1949, the chapel is used for small weddings and religious meetings. In 1958, the chapel was formally named for Dr. Kincheloe and his bronze bust placed in the foyer.

Oak View Baptist Church

Through the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. B.F. Proctor, Jr., children in the Taylor Hill community were transported to Proctor's Chapel for Sunday School over a period of approximately ten years. Then associational missionary, C.W. Bazemore, suggested establishing a Sunday School within the Taylor Hill community itself. On December 7, 1947 Proctor's Chapel became responsible for organizing a Sunday School on Arlington Street Extension.

The Sunday School was started the first Sunday in January 1948 under the name "Oak View" as suggested by Mr. E.J. Braswell. Under the sponsorship of Proctor's Chapel and its pastor, Rev. P.M. Hutchinson, classes were held in two homes in the area. Prayer meetings and revivals led to baptisms which were conducted at First Baptist.

On November 25, 1951 the Oak View Sunday School was constituted the Oak View Baptist Church with 48 charter members. Rev. Rudolph Evans was the first full-time pastor.

As a church body, we gave Oak View no financial assistance but extended our good will and, as in other cases, individual members were involved.

First Baptist Recreational Center

On July 3, 1951 Dr. J.W. Kincheloe turned the first shovel of earth in the ground-breaking ceremony which marked the beginning of construction of a youth center in back of the church. W.B. Middleton was chairman of the building committee. Other members were G.D. Modlin, P.H. Bradshaw, K.E. Hawkins, Sr., W.A. Bulluck, and John Wells.

The Youth Center cost about $4500 and included an

Old Kincheloe Parsonage and Recreation Building

auditorium 40 x 31 feet and two rooms for meetings and youth activities. It was used especially as headquarters for our Boy Scout Troop #239.

Edgemont Baptist Church

In the summer of 1951, the North Roanoke Associational Missionary, Rev. L. Grady Burgess, saw the need for a Baptist Church in the Edgemont area of Rocky Mount. Several Baptist Churches of the city, including First Baptist, joined together to rent a tent and set it up in the 1200 block of Tarboro Street. Services were held there from August 2, 1951 to August 24, then removed to the Scout Hut on the corner of Redgate Avenue and Nugent Street, where Sunday School began with 35 enrolled.

On February 10, 1952 Edgemont Baptist Church was constituted with 10 Baptist Churches and 12 ordained Baptist ministers participating. Twenty-eight people were presented as charter members. Since the records were held open for one month, by March 10, 1952 the charter members numbered 50.

Rev. Ernest Howell was the first pastor. By February 24, 1952 a deacon board had been elected and a Woman's Missionary Union organized. Rev. G.N. Cowan met with the deacons to help them organize.

In November the church moved to a home on the fairgrounds. In December Rev. Vivian Evans became the second pastor. He was succeeded by Billy T. Mobley (ordained at our church). Rev. William L. Self was the first full-time pastor.

On January 25, 1953 ground was broken for the educational building at 1150 Tarboro Street. First Baptist deacon and land developer, A. Hicks, gave one lot and First Baptist Church gave financial aid. When the first pastor attempted to lead the church to a different faith, Rev. G.N. Cowan and Dr. J.W. Kincheloe retained the deed and money until the church joined the Roanoke Association and the North Carolina Baptist Convention. Then the deed and money were delivered to Edgemont Baptist Church.

Edgemont Church was awarded the Church of the Year Award in 1958.

Swelton Height Baptist Church

On March 7, 1953 fourteen people met to worship at the home of Mr. and Mrs. David R. Lamm, 223 Lee Avenue, Rocky Mount. Led by Rev. Ernest Howell, they met weekly in

this home until April 26, 1953. At this time, 56 persons met at 200 Lee Avenue for the purpose of organizing Swelton Height Baptist Church under the aegis of Rev. Ernest Howell and Rev. L. Grady Burgess, Roanoke Associational Missionary. The 56 charter members came from Edgemont, Southside, Oakdale and North Rocky Mount Baptist Churches. Participating in constituting the new church were Rev. John E. Lanier, Dr. Douglas Branch, Rev. G.N. Cowan, Rev. E.C. Sexton (all of our church), and Rev. Vivian W. Evans, in addition to Rev. Burgess and Rev. Howell.

In September 1953, after much discussion and thorough study, it was recommended that the church apply for membership in the Roanoke Baptist Association. Since the church had been the mission of no church nor received financial assistance from any source, this had not previously been decided. Upon the favorable vote to join the Association, an independent group of 21 members withdrew to join an independent movement.

Rev. Ernest Howell was the first pastor. In 1957 church growth came to a halt with no additions, no missionaries sponsored, nothing given to missions. Rev. Howell resigned in February 1958, and Rev. M.L. Pridgen was called. By March 1, 1958 the church moved into a new air conditioned building and Rev. Pridgen was called as first full-time pastor. The church gave $500 for missions and received 55 members, 35 by baptism. The church was on the move.

Avalon Baptist Church

A building on Springfield Road belonging to Woodrow L. Marshall of our church was used as a meeting place for ser-

vices by a potential Baptist group. When the storm "Hazel" demolished the house in 1954, services were held at the home of a Mr. Warbritton until the new church was built on land purchased from a Mr. Battle.

The church was built by Rev. R.V. Thomas, also a building contractor, at a cost of $12,500 and constituted in 1954 with 20 charter members. Rev. George Breedlove was the first and Rev. Thomas the second pastor of Avalon Baptist Church.

First Baptist Plans for the Future

In this same year of 1954, under the leadership of Douglas Branch, our First Baptist members began to think of the future in terms of long-range planning. Being a downtown church meant that future expansion necessitated the acquisition of adjacent property if possible, or else removal to another site. No one wanted to consider the third option of remaining as we were and slowly drying up spiritually. A Long-Range Planning Committee was appointed and gradually the needed property was acquired on Church, Western and South Franklin Streets.

On February 18, 1954 a house and two lots at 632 Hill Street were purchased for $21,000. This was used as the parsonage during the Branch and Sodeman pastorates. After that period, the church decided to change its policy regarding a parsonage and included a certain amount in the pastor's salary to be used for rent or on the purchase price of a private dwelling. The Hill Street property was later sold.

Meanwhile, much thought and study was being expended on plans for a new educational building.

A Spurt in Missionary Baptist Churches

1955 was an extraordinary year in this locality for Missionary Baptist growth. By the end of 1955, four new Baptist churches had been constituted.

Lakeside Baptist Church

Lakeside Baptist Church was the first of these four to be organized. Most of their 252 charter members were from our church, trained, active and of unusual leadership capability. Dr. Kincheloe remarked that "in the many years of my ministry, this is the only church I've ever known to be full grown at birth."

On February 20, 1955 fifteen interested people met at the home of Austin Robbins to discuss the possibility of organizing a missionary Baptist Sunday School and Mission Station in the west Rocky Mount section. Austin Robbins and Joe Sugg were elected co-chairmen.

After discussion, a unanimous decision was made that the co-chairmen appear before the Board of Deacons of our church with a statement of principle; the group being determined to establish the fact that this move was in no way to be construed as a rebellion against or a breaking off from the mother church. A site committee was appointed to begin work at once.

On March 20, 1955 a general meeting for the community at large was held at the Rocky Mount Senior High School; 153 people were present and heard the report that this movement had received the blessings of the First Baptist Church. The site committee reported the availability of the Skeel's property, "Glenwood Hall," at the city lake. The group voted to

establish a Sunday School and Mission Station under the auspices of the First Baptist Church and appointed an 18-man Finance Committee.

On March 27 another meeting was conducted, at which time the group chose the name "Lakeside Baptist Sunday School and Mission Station"; authorized the purchase of the Skeels' property; and chose a secretary, a treasurer, a Committee on Committees and an Executive Committee.

On April 17, a registration held at the new church site brought the number of members to 245. By April 20, the Lakeside Mission had repaid the $7000 advanced by the mother church toward the initial payment on the property.

April 24, 1955 the doors of Lakeside Mission were opened with a completely organized Sunday School and Dr. John W. Kincheloe as interim pastor.

On June 5, the charter meeting was held at the First Baptist Church, and Lakeside Mission became Lakeside Missionary Baptist Church, constituted with 252 charter members.

Rev. Clarence E. Godwin, a former associate pastor of our church, was called to be their first pastor.

West Mount Baptist Church

West Mount Baptist Church at 223 West Mount Drive was organized August 21, 1955 with 35 charter members. At first, the church was called "Easonburg Baptist Church," but in 1958 the members voted to change the name to "West Mount" since there were two Easonburgs.

At first, meetings were held in the Home Demonstration Club House, but on March 1, 1956 construction was begun on the sanctuary and ten Sunday School rooms. Dedication and

Homecoming services were celebrated August 25, 1957.

Rev. David J. Cranford was the first full-time pastor.

Benvenue Baptist Church

The third Baptist Church to be constituted in this same year was Benvenue Baptist Church on R.F.D. #3. A previous attempt to start a missionary Baptist church in this area had failed.

Now some people in the community appealed to the First Baptist and to Stony Creek Churches for help. Permission was granted to use the Benvenue Home Demonstration Club House as a meeting place, and on March 20, 1955 the first meeting was held with 87 present. The five people from our church were Dr. Kincheloe, N.A. Wiggins, George Millar, Sr., Brian Scott, and Miss Imogene Douglas. From Stony Creek Church were Mr. and Mrs. John T. Coley. Brian Scott presided and Mrs. B.H. Saunders, Mrs. J.T. Boseman, Sr., and R.B. Gordon were appointed to organize a Sunday School. Dr. Kincheloe's sermon instructed them on how to organize a church.

Quickly outgrowing the Club House, permission was obtained from the Benvenue School Board to use the school facilities. A finance committee, Sunday School officers, and choir director were elected. As the Sunday School, under Superintendent Gordon's leadership, continued to grow, a plot of land bound by Routes 43 and 48 was purchased from Randolph Griffin for $6870. The State Mission Board contributed $1000 and First Baptist assisted in raising the rest. During this time, services were being conducted by guest ministers. August 15, 1955 the Rev. R.C. Shearin accepted the

call to be full-time pastor. A religious survey revealed many prospects.

On September 11, 1955 the mission was constituted into the Benvenue Baptist Church with 64 charter members. Taking part in the service from our church were M.L. Clack, moderator, Dr. Branch, Rev. Cowan, and Dr. Kincheloe.

Blandwood Baptist Church

Blandwood Baptist Church was the fourth missionary Baptist Church organized in this locality during 1955. The following facts are taken from the "History of Blandwood Baptist Church" written by Margaret Works Threatt.

"Plowing deeply into the rich soil of Baptist heritage and tradition, the seedling that was to become Blandwood Baptist Church was carefully planted and nurtured by the Roanoke Baptist Association. The husbandry actually began in the forty-third annual associational meeting held at Rosemary Church, Roanoke Rapids, N.C. on October 10, 1950.

"Here, upon a recommendation of the Executive Committee, a motion was unanimously passed to purchase a tent for use in extending mission efforts in the needy areas of the Association. An offering was taken both days of the meeting which amounted to $863.87. The First Baptist Church of Rocky Mount underwrote the balance for the purchase of the tent.

"At a later meeting at Williamston, the Executive Committee was empowered to call a missionary for the purpose of implementing this different type of Associational mission program, emphasizing the establishment of new churches. Rev. Grady L. Burgess, then pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, N.C., was called as new missionary for the Roanoke Association.

"In the spring of 1955, Mr. Burgess turned his attention to a newly developing suburb in the southeastern sector of Rocky Mount which seemed a likely place for a Baptist church. The Roanoke Association secured the services of a student missionary couple, Mr. and Mrs. Emil A. Mialik, whose work with the tent was highly successful. Mr. Mialik conducted services, did visitation and survey work, while Mrs. Mialik played piano or organ, sang and helped with Vacation Bible School. The survey revealed that at least 200 persons were interested. Those helping with the survey were the members of First Baptist Church, the Rocky Mount Council of Baptist Churches, and other interested Baptist leaders. Arlington Street Church provided teachers and equipment for the Vacation Bible School, which enrolled 61.

"On June 18, 1955 Mr. Mialik called a meeting of the residents of Blandwood community, presenting a report on the Associational Tent meetings. All agreed a mission was needed and an executive committee of 8 was appointed. Mr. George Stein offered the large basement of his new home for Sunday School and worship services.

"Supported by the Executive Committee and Dr. Douglas Branch, on July 17, 1955 the mission called Mr. Mialik to be their minister. On August 21 the Sunday School members voted to purchase an option on three lots in Blandwood for a church site and to proceed with organizational plans. The Rocky Mount Baptist Council of Churches was asked to call an organizational meeting for October 2, 1955.

"On September 25th, Emil A. Mialik was ordained in the First Baptist Chapel. Dr. Stewart Newman of Southeastern Seminary and Dr. Douglas Branch led this service. On October 2, 1955 Blandwood Church was constituted with 58

charter members. Mr. M.L. Clack, president of the Council and acting moderator, Clarence Lane, treasurer of the Mission, Rev. G.N. Cowan, Dr. J.W. Kincheloe, and Rev. Grady Burgess took part in the organizational service.

"The Roanoke Association, the Baptist State Mission Board, the Roanoke Builders Club, the First Baptist Church, Arlington Street Church, and various individuals gave the financial backing necessary to bring this church into being."

First Baptist New Educational Building

During Dr. Branch's pastorate, plans had been implemented to build a badly needed educational building. When Dr. Branch left us to become Executive Secretary of the North Carolina Baptist Convention, the building was already well underway. After Mr. Sodeman came, it was completed and on March 20, 1960 was opened for service. This was another major step forward and included adequate facilities for both the Kindergarten and Day Care Center.

Present Sanctuary and Education Building

Englewood Baptist Church

When it became apparent that the Englewood area would develop into a substantial residential section of the city, Baptist leadership had sufficient vision to accept the offer of an option on land that could become the site of a Baptist work. However, years of discussion brought no fruits and the option expired.

On February 27, 1962, following a study of "Glimpses of Glory" by C.C. Warren, the North Rocky Mount Baptist Church accepted the challenge to commitment and the invitation to begin a mission.

A survey was taken and on March 14 a mission committee was elected. Sanction of the North Roanoke Association was secured. In August, cottage prayer meetings in five homes brought 100 interested persons into focus. Revival services were held in Englewood School by the sponsoring church.

On August 26, Rev. John Privott taught the Sunday School lesson. Afterwards, at a business meeting, it was decided that this group would be a mission of North Rocky Mount Baptist Church and that its pastor would serve as supply pastor, conducting services at 9:45 A.M. and 6:30 P.M., with Sunday School and Training Union following these services.

On September 2, 1962 eighty-three people came to worship and found that arrangements had been made for regular services as they had known them in a full-time program.

The next decision was to acquire five lots (approximately 2-1/2 acres) of the Westridge subdivision adjoining Englewood. North Rocky Mount Church, Baptist State Convention, and North Roanoke Builders Club all gave sizeable contributions to help defray the cost. Arlington Street Church, Rocky Mount Calvary, Rocky Mount First Church, Lakeside,

Momeyer, Stony Creek, Weldon, West Edgecombe, Whitakers, and the people of the mission made liberal contributions.

On July 11, 1965 in Englewood Grammar School Auditorium, this mission of North Rocky Mount Baptist Church was constituted into Englewood Baptist Church with 74 charter members. Among those taking part in the service were Rev. Ted Williams of the Baptist State Convention; Rev. Joe Lister, president of the pastors' conference; Rev. John Privott, Superintendent of Missions of North Roanoke Association; Rev. Clarence Godwin, moderator of North Roanoke Association; R.A. Clack, chairman of the Steering Committee; and R.G. Scruggs, chairman of the Missions Committee.

Following the organizational service and fellowship, the body of worshipers adjourned to the site of the proposed new sanctuary at Englewood Drive and Winstead Road, where a ground-breaking ceremony was held.

Rev. Boyd Lambert was called as first pastor.

New Fellowship Hall and Church Staff

First Baptist Fellowship Building

After several years of discussion as to the feasibility of tearing down the present sanctuary and building a new one or building a fellowship hall first and then the sanctuary, the die was finally cast, the decision made. We would build the Fellowship Hall first. It would be next to the new Educational Building, facing Western Avenue. June 1, 1975 was not only our 95th birthday as a church, but the dedication day of the beautiful new Fellowship Hall with its lovely Alice Temple Room, large meeting and dining area, modern stainless steel kitchen and storage areas. If and when we do build a new sanctuary, the Fellowship Hall can serve as an interim worship space during the construction.

Though we have seen the Rocky Mount area well saturated with Southern Baptist Churches and noted that our church has been mother to many, we must never slacken our interest in missions. There will always be pockets of need for the knowledge of Christ and his forgiveness.

CHAPTER X

WE REMEMBER TO TEACH AND TRAIN

"These things command and teach." I Timothy 4:11.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." II Timothy 3:16.

First Baptist Sunday School

The first mention of a Sunday School in our church is found in the minutes for September 4, 1883, where it is stated that Sunday School books and expenses were $40. In the same minutes, we are told that Sunday School met every Sunday under the leadership of C.H. Harris, superintendent.

On February 10, 1884 the need for a strong Sunday School was recognized when Brother J.H. Thorp, during church conference, moved that collections be taken and applied as

Men's Bible Class—1945

follows: "Second Sunday night for Sunday School; third Sunday morning and night for Associational missions; all of which, for the present, are to be applied to this church in order to relieve it of the debt and to build up the Sunday School."

In 1887, our Sunday School enrollment was 64, with an average attendance of 35. By 1891, enrollment was 97 and in 1907 had reached 293. Except for a few figures, records for the Sunday School are very scanty for the first forty years.

As the town and church grew, the Sunday School grew also, reaching its peak in 1954 with 1870 enrolled. Since then, attendance has steadily declined until, in 1973, the enrollment was down to 1206. 1954 was the peak year for attendance also, averaging 975. By 1972, the average had declined to 474. The January 21, 1976 *Outreach* lists Sunday School enrollment as 968; Homebound, 84; Young Adults Away, 131; total enrollment, 1183; new members, 3; visitors, 10; and total attendance, 361.

In the conference of December 28, 1898 the motion was carried that a statement of the financial condition of the Sunday School be included in the treasurer's monthly report.

From this and succeeding reports, we note that the Sunday School was expected to be self-supporting but was church controlled in that the church elected the officers and approved policies and procedures before their adoption. The Sunday School continued to be self-supporting until the church adopted the unified budget in the 1950's.

On February 1, 1899 the church elected officers of the "Juvenile Sunday School" and urged the adults present to take a more personal interest in the school. All children were placed in one department to form the "Juvenile School." All of the officers elected at that time were men, while today men seldom work with Sunday School children.

In 1900, Brother B.W. Spilman, Sunday School missionary, led a Sunday School Institute in our church November 16-18. Out-of-town delegates and visitors were entertained in the homes of members. The church minutes for January 1, 1901 indicate that the attendance was good and the institute a great success.

At one time, the Sunday School had an "orchestra." The December 9, 1917 minutes state that $5.00 was to be paid to the Sunday School orchestra each month out of the Sunday School treasury.

In 1912, when our sanctuary was built, the basement was left unfinished but was intended for Sunday School use. However, sufficient funds were not available to complete this work until 1920.

In 1921, the Beginner and Primary Departments were organized. Mrs. George Gorham, Sr. was superintendent of the Beginners and Mrs. C.A. Griffin superintendent of the Primary Department. Mrs. S.T. Anderson became superintendent of the Primary Department about 1924 and led this work

for the next 36 years. In 1955, there were 200 Primaries in our church school.

By the mid-1930's, Sunday School enrollment had reached 1200, with an average attendance of 600-700. We again faced the need for enlargement. The Infantile Paralysis epidemic in 1935 postponed the need temporarily, for all young departments, from intermediates down, were closed for the duration.

But in October of 1938, a special business conference was called regarding Sunday School expansion. Mr. J.A. Harper, chairman of the Deacons, led the discussion and called on Mr. J.R. Bobbitt, superintendent of Sunday School, Mr. Kirby Hawkins, Mrs. S.T. Anderson, and Mr. A. Hicks for a presentation of specific needs in the various departments. The Building Committee presented plans for a new wing to be attached to our sanctuary as a Sunday School Annex, which would double our existing capacity. The plans were unanimously accepted by the church and the Annex built.

During Dr. Kincheloe's tenure, the church records for several years were inadvertently destroyed. The next minutes available were recorded during Dr. Branch's pastorate.

Now the Sunday School was emphasizing outreach. In cooperation with other churches, city-wide religious censuses and visitation programs increased Sunday School enrollment and attendance. Easter Sunday, April 1950, the attendance reached 1013. For the whole month of March 1951, the average attendance was 954. In 1954, our peak year for attendance, Dr. Branch began Junior Church in the Chapel in an effort to relieve overcrowded conditions. During the eleven o'clock service, the Juniors had Sunday School in the educational facilities.

The second Sunday in March 1955, Sunday School attendance was 1012 and Training Union attendance was 207. We again faced the need for enlargement. In May 1955, the church voted to erect a new educational building on the old (Kincheloe) pastorium lot. Ground-breaking ceremonies for the new building were held January 11, 1959. It was occupied on March 20, 1960.

When the church voted to erect the new building, a couples' class was meeting in the Scout Hut adjacent to the annex, and the nursery was meeting in the old parsonage with an enrollment of 92. Due to heating problems, the nursery was moved to the ground floor of the main building in November 1957, while the Young Adults (one class each of men and women) were transferred to the old parsonage. Later, the Scout Hut and parsonage were demolished to make way for the new building, so the church rented space at Harris Conservatory for the Couples' Class and space in a residence next to the Chapel for the Young Adults.

In 1958, the Junior Department—which met in the Fellowship Hall—had overflowed into the lower hall at the front of the sanctuary where two classes were meeting.

When Miss Virginia Beall came as educational director in 1956, she was asked to prepare for a closely graded Sunday School which the church planned to use at the completion of the new building. Therefore, for the next four years, great emphasis was placed on leadership training. State workers, film strips, and the church bulletin were used to inform the members about the recommended Sunday School methods. Dr. D.P. Brooks of the State Baptist Sunday School Department spoke several times, and Mr. C.S. Ray, minister of education from the First Baptist Church of Greensboro, spoke

at morning worship of what grading adults had accomplished in his church.

As the new building neared completion, it became increasingly clear that age-grading adults was meeting with a ground-swell of resistance. On December 20, 1959 an article appeared in the church bulletin stating that the deacons "unanimously and wholeheartedly" endorsed the reorganization and regrouping of adult classes.

The January 17, 1960 bulletin carried the unanimous endorsement of the monthly church business meeting when Randolph Sutton, Sunday School superintendent, put the motion to age-grade adults. This meant we would move from 8 adult classes to 30, with 5 new adult departments.

For many years, our church had maintained large adult classes. The men's class was so large it could only meet in the sanctuary. At its peak, it boasted 483 members. Among the long-time teachers of this class were Tom Avera , Sam Arrington, John Harper, Jack Murchison, John Daughtridge, Earl Privott, and Jim Batten.

Two large women's classes met in the former Ladies' Parlor with a movable partition separating them. Teachers of the Woman's Bible Class were Mrs. T.M. Arrington, Mrs. H.M. Finch, Mrs. C.A.G. Thomas, Mrs. John R. Lee, and Mrs. Penny Jones. Mrs. J.M. Fox started the Mary Ella Fox Class which was named for her. Other teachers of this class were Mrs. Mary Kidd Richards, Mrs. John R. Lee, and Mrs. S.T. Anderson.

From these two classes grew two more—the Thomas Class, with Mrs. C.A.G. Thomas as teacher, and the Mary Kidd Richards Class, with Mrs. Richards, teacher. While Mrs. Richards was teaching the Mary Ella Fox Class, it outgrew its room space and moved to the Chapel. The Fox Class then

filled its ranks with other young women. The Thomas Class drew some of its members from the Woman's Bible Class.

In 1960, January 4-8 was the Big Week for the Sunday School age-grading change-over. Mr. D.P. Brooks of the State Sunday School Department and 8 Sunday School leaders from the Southern Baptist Convention devoted a week to leading conferences, teaching department books, and mapping out a Sunday School Enlargement Campaign. At the monthly workers conference in January, the Sunday School voted to reorganize the school according to the plan worked out by the visiting leadership. In March 1960, when the new facility was occupied, the organization changed as follows:

	No. of Depts.		No. of Classes	
Department	**Old**	**New**	**Old**	**New**
Nursery	2	5		
Beginner	2	4		
Primary	1	6	12	
Junior	1	4	16	22
Intermediate	1	3	7	18
Young People	2	3	5	9
Adult	1	6	8	30
Totals	10	31	48	79

When we moved into the new educational building on March 20, 1960, the church school began Extended Sessions for Nursery and Beginner children. This meant voluntary workers, under supervision of the departmental superintendents, cared for the children during the 11:00 A.M. worship service, continuing the Sunday School activities.

As already indicated, some adults found it difficult to adjust to smaller classes. There were misunderstandings and errors in records which caused confusion at first. Some refused to

cooperate and stopped attending, while some were pleased with the new arrangement.

During the 1950's, a strong evangelistic fervor for the unsaved led not only to a visitation program in the community but, under the leadership of the pastor, special services were held for various age groups. On May 8, 1955 all adults were asked to meet in the sanctuary during the Sunday School hour for an evangelistic service. At other times, the pastor or visiting evangelist would conduct a special service for Juniors or Intermediates.

In October 1955, the Junior Church was discontinued and the Junior Department again integrated into the Sunday School, meeting in the Fellowship Hall.

Youth Week was inaugurated in the mid-1950's, with a large part of the activities centering around the church school. A staff of youth leaders was enlisted and trained. On a designated Sunday, they led departments and taught classes, thus bridging the gap between youth and adults.

For years, special offerings for N.C. Baptist causes and institutions were promoted through the Sunday School on the following schedule:

February	Homes for Aging
May	Baptist Hospital
June	Christian Education
September	State Missions
November	Children's Homes

Presently, the first three of these offerings are included in the unified budget. The church has placed great emphasis on the Thanksgiving offering in the past, having always had a

tender compassion for orphans. For many years, our church was the single largest contributor to the orphanage. When Mr. W.A. Bulluck was Sunday School superintendent, he went to Thomasville to deliver the check personally. He took pleasure in setting goals for each department, as well as the total offering. As a result, the offering increased each year until, in 1957, it reached $4200. The Men's Bible Class, also, avidly sponsored this project. Following the age classification of adults, the Men's Chapel Class has continued to lead the school in the amount of this offering.

Besides teaching the Bible lessons, the various classes and departments have opted to have Christmas parties, replenish the pantry for the needy, sponsor needy families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, honor the older members with parties, paint and refurbish their own classrooms, write to our servicemen, contribute to the Vietnam Gift Pac, and write and produce a puppet show depicting the Easter story to be shown in other departments.

White Christmas began in 1956. Gifts of non-perishable food wrapped in white were brought to Sunday School to be sorted and distributed by the Benevolence Committee and the Royal Ambassadors at Christmas.

In 1958, the church decided to use the Forward Program of Church Finance. It's still being used in a modified form. The Sunday School always assists in carrying on this program. Formerly, each class and department were given a budget goal; then all departments would meet in the sanctuary on pledge day for a special service and "grand" march to turn in pledge cards. Eventually, this procedure lost favor and was discontinued. In the early '70's, we began turning in pledge cards at Sunday School classes or church services.

In 1966-67, Dr. Cherry conducted weekday Bible study for adults. The class met for 1-1/2 hours every week for three months, in the spring and fall. In 1967, with the coming of Earl Long as Minister of Education, special studies were conducted for nine months to improve the quality of work done by volunteers, with the last four months of the Sunday morning sessions designed to train Sunday School workers. Other classes had been conducted during the evening Training Union hour, when Bible and Doctrine were emphasized. This special training was given for two years.

In August 1967, the Sunday School Council decided to put the children and youth departments on a grade basis rather than an age basis. This method of grading conformed to that of the public school and went into effect in October. The children in the first six grades are in the "Children's Department" and those in seventh through twelfth grades in "Youth Departments."

When Irvin Rackley became Coordinator of Visitation in 1967, the Sunday School prospect files were updated and the Sunday School Council approved an active visitation program. Goals were set and guidelines laid down for developing Bible teaching skills and outreach ministry. This Adult Thrust resulted in the formation of a new class for adults 37-41; overall increased attendance; and 17 new Sunday School members.

In December 1968, our Sunday School was awarded a certificate for being 10th in the state among the churches completing training books in Category #17 on Sunday School Principles and Methods.

The church appointed a Planning-Survey Committee in

1969 to review every aspect of our church life. Their report follows:

"Year	Average Attendance	Enrolled In S. S.
1926	700	929
1945	—	1100
1954	975	1870
1964	575	1300

"Within the past five years (1964-1968), the pattern of our Sunday School organization and enrollment has changed. We went from five nursery departments to four; three Beginner departments to two; six Primary departments to three; four Junior departments to three; three Intermediate departments to two; then last year changed to two Junior High and two Senior High departments. Average enrollment in the younger departments has declined, while enrollment in adult departments has increased.

"We enrolled 126 persons, on the average, each year for the past four years in Sunday School but needed 139 persons to hold our own in total enrollment.

"The median age span for our Sunday School is 39 years, while the median age for the city population is 29.4 years. This means that half the enrollment is over 39 and reflects a high age average which tells us we have not reached younger groups as we should."

The Young People Away Department was organized in 1969 with Mrs. J.W. Henderson superintendent. 125 young people living out of town, in school, service or business, made up the enrollment.

On October 1, 1970 the Southern Baptist Convention Grouping-Grading plan for Sunday School became effective as follows:

Pre-school (replacing the terms "Nursery" and "Beginner")

Children (replacing "Primary" and "Junior")
Youth (replacing "Intermediate" and "Youth")
Adults (persons having finished high school)

In preparation for these changes, study courses were held by our church and by the North Roanoke Association at our church. The date for grading in the adult division was changed from October 15 to January 1, and the Cradle Roll Department was discontinued on September 30, 1970.

As the result of a survey in the Bel-Air subdivision of the city, Mr. Irvin Rackley, superintendent of Sunday School, inaugurated a bus ministry. The bus was chartered from Safety Transit Company and used first for Vacation Bible School in June 1970 to transport a total of 70 pupils to the school. Following Bible School, the bus operated on Sunday morning until the spring of 1973. The expense was shared by our Local Mission budget and the Sunday School.

In 1918, the Woman's Missionary Society compiled a list of Cradle Roll babies for the first time. It wasn't until 1926 that the Cradle Roll was reported in the Associational record. There were 28 enrolled.

During Dr. Branch's ministry, he worked with the Cradle Roll Department in planning two Dedication services each year in May and November. Parents were invited to participate in a service in which they dedicated themselves to the task of providing a Christian home and nurture in the Christian faith. Five to ten families participated in each service.

In December 1956, the Cradle Roll Department began recognizing each new member by placing a rosebud on the pulpit lectern at the eleven o'clock worship service. The pastor recognized the parents during the service, and a member of the family carried the blossom home afterward.

The church bulletin for June 10, 1957 carried the following article concerning Cradle Roll:

"The Cradle Roll Department has its ministry in the home, where there are children from birth to four years of age not enrolled in the Nursery Department. When the child begins Sunday School, he is transferred to the Nursery Department.

"The aim of the Cradle Roll is a Christian home for every baby. The organization has a superintendent, associate superintendent, secretary, and a visitor for every ten homes. The visitor goes into the home at least once a month.

"Through the courtesy of Drummond's Florist, our Cradle Roll Department presents a rosebud to the mother of each child on the Sunday after the baby is enrolled in the department." Enrollment in the Cradle Roll peaked at 83 in 1932.

It is believed the early leaders of this department were Mrs. A. Hicks, Mrs. E.F. Duke, Mrs. Steve Gupton. Miss Annie Gaynor, the last superintendent, served from the mid-forties until September 30, 1970 when, according to Denominational plans, this work was discontinued.

Our Sunday School superintendents (later directors) were:

C.H. Harris, 1881
George L. Parker
W.B. Spiers
D. Worthington
S.V.T. Chamblee
W.R. Lancaster
I.J. Dowdy
W.A. Bulluck, 1919-1932
B.H. Johnson
J.O. Bobbitt
R.S. Conyers, 1933-1935
J.R. Bobbitt, 1936-1938
J.A. Harper, 1939-1948
C.W. Parker, 1949-1952
H.S. Merrell, 1953-1955
E.E. Murchison, 1956-1957
Randolph Sutton, 1958-1959
Alfred L. Stancil
A.H. Phillips, Jr.
Irvin Rackley
Robert Chandler, 1974-1976

Baptisms in the years 1967-1969 were: 1967-36; 1968-10; 1969-26. The budget for 1976 includes $4300 for Sunday School and Vacation Bible School.

Vacation Bible School

"Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths." Psalm 25:4.

The Southern Baptist Convention began active promotion of Vacation Bible School September 1, 1924 when the department was organized. Soon thereafter, Mrs. S.T. Anderson attended a meeting at which a N.C. Baptist worker spoke on the value of Bible School. She returned home determined that our children should have that opportunity. Miss Ida Ballance had just been employed by our church and was well qualified for this new educational approach.

Miss Ballance and Mrs. Anderson collaborated to conduct a two week Bible school. Mrs. Anderson worked with 90 children from the Beginner and Primary Departments, while Miss Ballance took the Juniors. John W. Kincheloe, Jr. was principal and Miss Florence Winstead the music director. This was in the summer of 1926.

The Association didn't report on Bible Schools until 1927, at which time First Baptist reported a school with 149 enrolled and an average attendance of 120. After this, we reported no other schools until 1936. However, there is a discrepancy in the records. Mrs. W.D. Farmer believed the records were wrong and that a school was conducted each year after 1926. Substantial and continuous reports are not available until 1954, when Miss Imogene Douglas was principal. The record book for this year states: "First school was held in 1926 and

each year since." Associational records do not support this. Mrs. Anderson was unable to work in Bible School for several years but believes the school continued each year. She did help with the preparation for the second year when the school was again led by Miss Ballance.

The third year Miss Ballance had married and no one else was available to lead, so Mrs. Anderson petitioned the Board of Deacons for $100 to employ Mrs. Darden to return long enough to conduct Bible School.

Our known Vacation Bible School superintendents have been:

Miss Ida Ballance	Mr. Lowell Sodeman
Mrs. Dred Darden	Mrs. George Hooks, Jr.
Mrs. J.H. Stokes	Mr. Clarence Vassar
Miss Imogene Douglas	Mr. Earl Long
Miss Virginia Beall	Mr. Ray Luck
Dr. Harold Gallaspie	Mr. Harry Griffin

There are no records of the superintendents from 1929 through 1937, or from 1939 through 1953. The year of greatest enrollment was 1954, with 415—and an average attendance of 350 and 3 professions of faith. Miss Douglas was superintendent during this landmark year which has never been equaled. Mrs. Virginia Beall Hooks has served longer than any other superintendent—a total of eleven years, but not consecutively.

The Vacation Bible School has usually followed the same pattern: Preparation Day, ten days to two weeks of school, and Parents' Night Program. For years a school picnic or cook-out climaxed this effort, but the most popular was the church-wide picnic held in a city park, followed by a Sing and devotional.

In 1960, when we could use our new educational facility, there were two Nursery and Beginner Departments, three Primary, four Junior, and one Intermediate Department.

In 1964 it was decided to have the Intermediate section at night. Enrollment went from 21 in 1963 to 41 in 1964. Since then, we've kept the Intermediates at night but also had a section for seventh and eighth graders during the day in 1972-1973.

The Youth-at-Night section ran five to ten nights, using varied material. Two studies which aroused particular interest were centered on beliefs of other denominations and a short history of our church. The presentation of the former featured speakers from other faiths who led open discussions. The latter combined a drama workshop with a study of some of the dramatic parables of Jesus. Dr. Cherry led the Bible study; Mrs. H.L. Bell and Mr. Bill Nelms led in writing and rehearsing a drama on the history of our church called "The Prophecy of the Pipes" which was presented at an evening worship service.

A bus ministry was provided in 1970, 1971, and 1972. The first year the bus route went only to the Bel-Air section on Highway 97, with a total of 70 people reached. In 1971, the Englewood area was added. Two buses brought in over 100 children to Bible School. Mr. Irvin Rackley, Sunday School superintendent, supervised the bus ministry. Unfortunately, when he moved his membership, the bus ministry was discontinued until 1975-1976.

In 1967 Mr. Earl Long, Minister of Education, and Mrs. Sam Smith, Day Care Director, thought that the Day Care children should be allowed to share in the training offered by Bible School. Day Care workers were provided with materials and followed the same schedules as the others, with the excep-

tion of participation in the joint worship service and Parents' Night, until 1973.

Since stewardship is a part of the training involved, an offering for the cooperative program is taken each day. Records show the offering varies between $44 and $82 a year.

For some years, the importance of evangelism was stressed and the pastor conducted special services for Juniors and Intermediates during the last week of the school. The peak year for professions of faith was 1958, with 12 being made.

January Bible Study

Four days to a week of intensive Bible study has long been the custom in our church. It takes place the first week in January. Sometimes the pastor leads these special studies, as did Dr. Branch, Mr. Sodeman, and Dr. Cherry. At other times, a qualified teacher is secured to preach on Sunday to begin the study and continue through Wednesday night.

Some of the teachers in recent years have been: Dr. Perry Crouch in 1972; Dr. Clifton J. Allen, 1973; Dr. John Carlton of Southeastern Seminary, 1974; Mr. Richard Spencer, Southeastern Seminary, 1975; and Dr. Alan P. Neely, Missionary to Colombia, South America, 1976.

B.Y.P.U.—BAPTIST TRAINING UNION

Records for the BYPU, later BTU, are sparse indeed. This valuable arm of the teaching-training program is now (1976) non-existent.

Mrs. S.T. Anderson recalls that in 1909 a group of young people were meeting at the church prior to the evening service.

In the years 1915-1917, during Dr. Livingston Johnson's ministry, there was a strong Baptist Young Peoples' Union.

The Roanoke Association report for October 1935 listed the young peoples' work as BYPU. This record shows we didn't list a general BYPU organization but had a BYPU with Adult, Senior, Intermediate, and Junior unions.

The 1936 Roanoke Associational record lists this organization as Baptist Training Union. In this year, our church reported having a BTU director, Senior, Intermediate, and Junior BTUs, and a Story Hour.

For 62 years (1909-1971), our church offered this training in church membership to all age groups. In 1971, Mrs. Cameron Winston was the last church-elected BTU director.

One adult group and the Silent People continued to meet for a while, but the gas shortage of 1974 and decreasing interest finally brought the meetings to an end.

Known BTU directors were:

I.A. Watson, 1939-1946
W.W. Mangum, 1947
A.L. Stancil, 1948-1952
W.D. Waters, 1953
Mrs. W.M. Wester, 1954
L.O. Gupton, 1955-1957
Nancy W. Lancaster, 1958-1959
George Hooks, Jr., 1960-1961
A.H. Phillips, Jr., 1962-1963
Douglas Barnes, 1964-1966
Harold Austin, 1967-1968
James Ingoldsby, 1969
Mrs. C.P. Winston, 1970-1971

CHAPTER XI

WE REMEMBER OUR WOMEN'S WORK

"But sanctify the Lord God in your heart: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." I Peter 3:15.

Ladies' Aid Society

"Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come." Proverbs 31:25.

The church minutes for September 13, 1882 state that "Sister Westie Armstrong was appointed a committee of one to wait upon our members and see what amounts each one would pay quarterly on our pastor's salary, and report at our next meeting."

Times were hard, the church in debt, and since it was so difficult to raise the pastor's salary, it became the practice to select men and women who would visit the members' homes and solicit for this purpose. Part of the time, these collectors

were paid a small percentage of the receipts for their work.

Even so, the monetary difficulties grew worse. When Reverend Lynch became pastor and had no place to stay a committee of Brother T.M. Arrington, Brother J.J. Coley, and Pastor Lynch took their need to the citizens of Rocky Mount, soliciting funds to build the Baptist preacher a "study."

The women of the church addressed this problem in a different way. It is now unknown when the Ladies' Aid Society first began, but it must have been very early in the life of the church. The Ladies' Aid used their proven talents for cooking and sewing as a means to serve their Lord and alleviate the church debt. Catering for private clubs and the general public, they served brunswick and oyster stews; fried chicken and fish; homemade ice cream, cake and other sweet treats; held bazaars and rummage sales, and evidently sold at least one cookbook.

In April 1976, a local back yard sale produced an old cookbook which was purchased and presented to Mrs. Sam Smith as a memento of our church. This yellowed and fragile old paperback carries on its cover the following legend:

DAINTIES
LADIES' AID SOCIETY
of the
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
ROCKY MOUNT, N.C.
HOUSEHOLD ORNAMENTS
and
Good cooking are always acceptable, as are also good
JEWELRY, SILVERWARE and CUT GLASS
Bought from
GEO. L. PARKER JEWELRY CO.
1st North Main St., Rocky Mount, N.C.

The author of this cookbook, Mrs. Sanner, was not a native of North Carolina but seems to have been from Ohio, judging from the testimonials. Some of the more exotic titles of her concoctions are: Egyptian Lotus, Heavenly Hash, Nasturtium Salad, Princess Oysters, Marrow Balls, Sassafras Shrub, and Salimagundi. Since no date is in evidence, it is guessed that this book was sold by the Ladies' Aid in the early nineteen hundreds.

By such means the "study" was built, added on to as needed, and after its removal to Sunset Avenue, a new parsonage built. This done, it was time to raise the funds for a new sanctuary. Two thousand dollars was earned for this cause by the Ladies' Aid.

When Mr. T.M. Arrington read his short history of the church at the dedicatory service for the new sanctuary in 1913, he gave high praise to the women of the Ladies' Aid for their work and faithfulness in raising large sums for the "study," the parsonage, and the sanctuary.

Early in Dr. Kincheloe's pastorate, the Ladies' Aid Society was phased out and the women channeled their efforts into missions and the Florence Avera Arrington Missionary Society. The church membership was learning how to support God's work the Biblical way, by tithes and offerings. Also, the monetary pressures were becoming less stringent.

Extant records of the Aid Society consist of a few references in the church minutes, therefore most of the information has been received through interviews with Mrs. W.E. King, Mrs. S.T. Anderson, and Mrs. Belle Ricks Holcombe.

The earliest presidents of the Aid Society are not known, but in 1911 Mrs. Randolph P. Gibson was presiding. She was followed by Mrs. Mit Griffin, Mrs. Hannah Robbins, Mrs.

W.E. King, Mrs. E.W. Stewart, and Mrs. Alice Temple, each of whom served several years.

"That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute." I Timothy 6:18.

THE FLORENCE AVERA ARRINGTON MISSIONARY SOCIETY

"O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Matthew 15:28.

"Laborers together with God." I Cor. 3:9.

The Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention began in 1888. The North Carolina Woman's Missionary Union began with its first Central Committee appointed in 1877, with Mrs. J.M. Heck of Raleigh president. Because of opposition by the men of the Convention, the Central Committee was discontinued for the next nine years. Then in 1886 the second Central Committee was appointed, with Miss Fannie E.S. Heck as president. Therefore, Woman's Missionary Union in North Carolina has been in continuous existence since 1886. But the Woman's Missionary Society of little Rocky Mount Baptist Church began in 1882! This amazing feat was accomplished by a brave, spirit-led lady by the name of Florence Avera Arrington.

From its beginning, Rocky Mount had been steeped in the influence of the strong Primitive Baptist Church, which believed in neither missions nor Sunday School. Our church was weak, a mere infant less than three years old. Yet Mrs. Arrington would not wait but gathered two other women (one of whom didn't really believe in missions) and formed a missionary society. She herself served as president, secretary and treasurer. Since she had no precedent or format to follow, she

used what she had: the Bible, tracts sent out by the Mission Board, and prayer. Each woman would lay ten cents on the table each month, amounting to $3.60 a year. This was sent to Miss Heck in Raleigh for distribution.

In a day of small things, Mrs. Arrington courageously persisted in this work for 29 years. When Mrs. Arrington resigned in 1911, Mrs. H.M. Finch, the capable and farsighted wife of the new Y.M.C.A. director, succeeded her.

Since it is not known exactly when our Society became affiliated with the N.C. Woman's Missionary Union, we quote from a letter written by Mrs. W.D. Briggs, W.M.U. Executive Secretary of North Carolina, sent in reply to an inquiry from Mrs. D.M. Pearsall, our Society president:

"The first year in which W.M.U. minutes record a meeting was 1891. I could not find a report from Rocky Mount that year. In 1892, there was $5.58 reported from Rocky Mount, then in the Eastern Association."

(Our church was never in the Eastern Association. It began in the Tar River Association which, when divided, became the Roanoke Association. This was also divided, and we were then in the North Roanoke Association. From this letter, however, it appears that the W.M.S. could have been in the Eastern Association in the early years.)

Continuing with Mrs. Briggs' letter: "In 1897, the report to the state says 'Our membership is small but our average attendance is ten. We are arranging to send a box to a frontier missionary.' "

"There is no mention of Roanoke Association until 1908, with Mrs. S.J. Everett of Williamston as Vice President, as Superintendents were then called. From then on, Rocky Mount reported every year with Roanoke Association."

The Woman's Missionary Society of our church grew very slowly as long as the Ladies' Aid was striving to help with the financial problems. Once these obligations were taken care of, the women could turn their attention to missions.

In the fall of 1915, Dr. Livingston Johnson came to be pastor. Many women credit Mrs. Johnson with our enlarged vision of missions, for she was dedicated to its cause.

From its inception in 1882 until 1916, the financial arrangement of the ten cents on the table remained in effect. Then it was observed that Mrs. Johnson was giving far more than this. Inspired by her example, the women's pledges zoomed to 25¢—even to $1.00 a month!

Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Finch both knew about the idea of dividing the Society into small groups called "Circles." So in October 1916, five or six neighborhood circles were formed. By the following February, the increased membership necessitated the formation of more circles. At this time, our offerings went through the W.M.S. rather than the church.

One of the special interests of the W.M.S. during this era was participating in the 75 Million Campaign. Mrs. Belle Ricks Holcombe, treasurer of the Society at that time, says that in five years the Society raised $15,750 for the 75 Million Campaign, all of which passed through her hands.

Other activities included aid to a Mr. Baker, ministerial student at Mars Hill and Wake Forest; mission work in the community; and conducting meetings at Caledonia Prison Farm and the County Home.

When Mrs. Finch resigned in 1927, she was succeeded by Mrs. D.M. Pearsall and Mrs. S.E. Ballentine, each serving for two years. They were followed by Mrs. W.D. Joyner, who served ten years.

It was the practice for the meetings to be held in the Ladies' Parlor (back of the sanctuary) during the winter and in the basement (now the "old" Fellowship Hall) in the summer. There was no air conditioning, but the meetings were well attended by members and many visitors, often exceeding one hundred.

The work continued to expand with the adoption of Dr. J.B. Hipps, missionary to China. We paid $800 a year toward his salary. In 1946, this amount was raised to $1000. Also, directed personal service was initiated. This was the forerunner of community missions and mission action. One well-remembered incident was the care given a woman of limited means who was a terminal cancer patient. Dr. Kincheloe furnished her aspirin. The women of the Society furnished clean white cloths for bandages. The patient's dearest wish was fulfilled when the W.M.S. president, Mrs. E.H. Tharrington, provided a robe and artificial flowers for her shroud. The patient longed to see what she would wear to meet her Lord. At her death, the Society sent living flowers.

The almost continuous changes in materials, methods, procedures, and terminology began at the local level in the fifties, for this has been an experimental era. With so many demands being made on everyone's time, this constant flux is an effort to find better ways of carrying on the Lord's work by reaching more people where they are.

The circles, formerly known by number, were given the names of missionaries or adherents of the mission cause. The Society, long since named for its mother figure, Florence Avera Arrington, became an A-1 Society and was, for two years, an A-1 Union. All money-making schemes had been abandoned in favor of free will offerings, and the Society had

voted to limit the terms of office to two consecutive years. An exception to this rule was made of the treasurer's office. Two sisters, Mrs. J.R. Chambliss and Mrs. Grover Robbins, served as treasurers for many years by alternating their work, one serving as treasurer while the other was circle chairman, and vice versa.

In January 1941, Mrs. S.T. Anderson, a faithful member since 1908, became president. Emphasis was given to tithing and securing subscriptions to *Royal Service,* the W.M.S. magazine which carried the program and informational material as well as the Prayer Calendar of Missionary Birthdays.

One project dear to the hearts of the women was the "Milk Fund." Melvina Roberts, missionary to the Navajo Indians in Farmington, New Mexico, had appealed for help for "her" Indian babies. Miss Annie Gaynor, nurse and loyal member of the Business Women's Circle, responded by contributing in memory of her sister. Soon, the Business Circle and then the whole Society were involved, continuing this project for many years.

Another project was the "Hundred Thousand Club" in which the whole Society and the youth groups participated. This was an effort to relieve the Foreign Mission Board of debt and embarrassment after a member absconed with a large sum of money.

In the summer of 1941, the whole church was thrilled when two of our girls were crowned Queens Regent at the Girls' Auxiliary House Party. Mrs. D. Ernest Bulluck was their leader at this time.

Two representatives were sent to Ridgecrest, the Society underwriting part of their expense. The Y.W.A.'s, G.A.'s,

R.A.'s, and Sunbeams were being carefully fostered and nurtured in the Lord's work.

During the war years, the Society collaborated with other churches and paid $170 toward the salary of a Bible teacher in the city schools. We were also involved with the Red Cross, making bandages, knitting, sending packages overseas, and serving at the Servicemen's Booth. One report states that this last activity cost $452.62 for one month. The various churches shared this duty in rotation. Our Society gave a lamp for the Red Cross Recreation Room at Fort Bragg, which was furnished by the local Red Cross Chapter. Y.W.A. girls and W.M.S. women filled many Russian kits to be sent overseas.

Part of the report for December 31, 1941—Mrs. Anderson, president, and Mrs. J.E. Brown, treasurer—was as follows:

No. of Circles..... 16	Home Missions .... $ 150.00
No. on Roll 498	Lottie Moon..... $ 450.00
No. 100,000 Club Members .. 30	Heck Memorial .... $ 43.00
Hipps' Salary $800.00	Total..... $3692.32

In 1944, we sent four Negro Girl Scout leaders to Atlanta, Georgia for study and training. Four recently organized churches (Oakdale, Southside, Johnson's Chapel, and West Edgecombe) were assisted with contributions, and W.M.S. members served as hostesses at the U.S.O. House.

By 1945, the Hundred Thousand Club was no longer needed, but the Protestant Christians in Italy were in dire straits, so the W.M.S. began to send four-pound boxes of food each week, also boxes of clothes. For these, charming letters of appreciation were received frequently from Mario and Bianca

Giammetti of Rome. This was also the year we prepared our first year-book, and reached a total of 83 tithers.

Besides the Florence Avera Arrington Missionary Society, the W.M.U. included: Mary Ella Fox Sunbeams, Mary Currin Intermediate G.A.'s, Laura Parker Lucas R.A.'s, Matthew T. Yates R.A.'s, Fannie E.S. Heck Jr. G.A.'s, and Juliette Mather Y.W.A.'s.

With the Southern Baptist Relief Board furnishing the duffle bags in which to make shipment, the W.M.S. now engaged in sending clothes to the World Emergency Relief.

In 1946, the Society was requested by the Roanoke Association to contribute to the Educational Fund being established to help foreign students at Chowan College. This project lasted many years. Also in this year, Mrs. Alice Temple reported that 245 boxes of food and clothes had been sent to the Italian Christians.

In June 1948, Dr. J.B. Hipps, missionary to China, spoke to the Society while on furlough.

In 1949, the number of tithers reached 208; a Round Table Book Club was begun; Bibles were sent to foreign lands; and the mission to become Oak View Church was given $100.

In 1950, Florence Avera Arrington Society received the Certificate of Award for meeting all the requirements on the Standard of Excellence.

The Roanoke Baptist Builders Club began in 1951 and gathered many loyal supporters among our members. Through monthly contributions, this organization was able to assist young or weak churches in the Association to build, buy a site, or enlarge. Also in 1951, our W.M.U. had three Sunbeam Bands (the Hilda Mayo, Mary Ella Fox, and Arthur Gillespie Sunbeams); a new Intermediate R.A.; 21 circles, including a

large Business Women's Circle and a Young Business Women's Circle.

After Dr. J.B. Hipps was forced out of Shanghai by the Communists, he spoke to the W.M.S. on April 17, 1950 about the state of affairs in China under Communist rule. Since he had reached retirement age, Dr. Hipps affiliated with Southeastern Seminary and lived in Wake Forest until his death. The W.M.S. asked the Foreign Mission Board for another missionary to sponsor, preferably one from North Carolina. We were assigned Mrs. James E. Humphrey, missionary to Nigeria, who is a native of Durham, N.C.

In 1951, the Society contributed to the Howard Memorial Educational Fund to help needy college students; maintained a nursery for mothers with small children during the general meeting; gave each youth group a circle sponsor; and had the youth present excellent programs about their work and experiences at summer camp.

Mrs. Humphrey first spoke before our Society while on furlough in 1952.

1953 was a special year for Florence A. Arrington Society because a constitution and by-laws were written and a short history of the Society was written and presented verbally by Mrs. George Gorham, Sr. on January 19, 1953. Much of the early material in this history is drawn from Mrs. Gorham's work, since the records from 1882 to 1940 have disappeared.

Also in 1953, we had 22 circles meeting in the morning, afternoon, or at night. We had the *Royal Service,* the yearbook, Guide Book, and a manual. There were 585 members in the Society, with an average attendance of 216. There were 464 women contributing to the Cooperative Program and 236 tithers.

Months earlier, the W.M.S. had initiated plans for a church library. On the night of January 20, 1953 all was in readiness for the dedication service. The library was situated on the landing in the South Educational Wing and named for Mrs. H.M. Finch—the Estella Riley Finch Memorial Library.

About this time it was proposed that the Society sponsor its own Educational Loan Fund in order to assist needy local young people. Mr. Sam Arrington was trustee for this fund. Many young people were aided but, unfortunately, after a reasonable length of time, only two recipients had repaid their loans. Each one had been required to sign a pledge that they would begin to repay the loan when they started to work. Eventually, this forced the discontinuance of the Loan Fund.

In 1955, in response to a request, the W.M.S. sent 2000 processed used Christmas cards to Miss Evelyn Schwartz, missionary in Jakarta, Indonesia. These were to be used in her children's work, hopefully to gain entrance into more homes. Crayons were sent by the young people's organizations.

To stimulate use of our library, Mrs. John R. Lee, then president, donated twenty-five credit-approved books in memory of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Saul Winstead.

The custom of presenting the prayer calendar and praying for the missionaries at each general meeting was instituted, and the Society received the Certificate of Recognition of Advancement to "Advanced" Society.

A love offering was sent to Mrs. M.V. Gonnsen in Colorado to help the Dulce Baptist Mission buy a needed musical instrument. A young Negro girl was sent to Shaw University for a week in summer to receive religious leadership training. The Mirandas, two Cuban girls attending Chowan College, were sent a gift to help meet their expenses.

In 1956-1957, we received a coveted award—the Stewardship Award—for finally achieving 50% of the W.M.S. tithing. We also received the Certificate of Achievement in Mission Study and the Certificate of Recognition as an Advanced W.M.S. for 1957-1958. During these two years we had 410 W.M.S. members, 60 young people attending camp, and won the Nash County Banner.

In 1958-1959, programs and refreshments at the Boys' Training School were sustained on a regular basis by the W.M.S. A memorial service was held for the 28 members who had passed away and memorial books in the name of each deceased member were presented to Estella Riley Finch Library by the W.M.S. The constitution and by-laws of the Society were revised; strong support was given to the Forward Program; plans were executed for the Farewell Reception for Dr. and Mrs. Branch at the Ricks Hotel; the mahogany breakfront in the new church parlor was given by the W.M.S. in honor of Mrs. D.M. Pearsall, president emeritus, when the new Educational Building was dedicated; four W.M.S. members received 5-year accreditation cards as a result of the Jubilee Leadership Course; and our missionary, Rachel Thompson Humphrey, and her husband spoke at our church.

In April of 1960, the Baptist Business Women's Federation disbanded, and our general W.M.S. meetings were held at night every other month to accommodate the Business Circles. A $100 donation was made to the Mixon Memorial Fund of Chowan College; our W.M.S. and the Y.W.A. received Advanced recognition; one Girls' Auxiliary received Honor rating and one received the Advanced Certificate.

1962 brought a significant change in that the Florence Avera Arrington Society was divided into two Societies. The

original Society continued meeting in the morning or afternoon, while the "night" Society—later named for Martha Gilliland—met at night. The latter was made up of women who worked outside the home or preferred to attend night meetings.

The work which years before had been called "directed personal service" had become "community missions" and broadened in scope. The new terminology now became "mission action," growing still further in concept. Some of the projects of this era have been: collecting newspapers for the Workshop for the Handicapped (a sheltered workshop); serving supper to the Youth Choir prior to the Sunday night service; mission action at rest homes; Christmas in August; ditty bags filled for servicemen in Vietnam; operation Santa Claus (gifts for mental hospital patients); help with school lunch programs, the church pantry and clothes closet; $800 for Honduran relief; funds for local relief due to the economic depression; supply clothes for needy school children; and stuffing plastic bags with toilet articles for migrants in Asheville, N.C.

During these later years, a continuing problem has been poor attendance at the general meetings. In order to alleviate this, the social committee began to serve light refreshments prior to the general meeting. After several years, this was discontinued. The milk fund was also discontinued in 1967.

In 1969, Camp Mundo Vista at Asheboro, N.C. became the focus of W.M.U. summer activities, with many of our women and young girls in attendance. In this year also, the Florence A. Arrington Society became a "Distinguished" Society; 43 girls participated in the G.A. Coronation; and 37 girls went to G.A. camp.

As a result of the review of the book *Shantung Revival* by

Mrs. George L. Hooks, Jr., a new prayer group was formed called the "Seekers." Later, this group, meeting twice a month instead of once, was assimilated into the W.M.S.

Beginning in 1971, the terminology changed again. The Woman's Missionary Society became Baptist Women; Y.W.A. became Baptist Young Women; the G.A.'s were reorganized as Girls in Action, and Acteens; the Sunbeams were reorganized into Mission Friends; and circles became groups.

In 1966, Miss Helen Daughtridge was instrumental in beginning what is called the W.M.U. Abiding Fund or Memorial. Mr. Sam Arrington is trustee for this fund. Under the regulations set forth by the legal instrument, anyone can make memorial gifts to the Abiding Memorial. On December 1st of each year, 10% of the fund shall be given to the church treasurer for the Lottie Moon offering. On March 1st of each year, 5% shall be given to the Annie Armstrong offering. On September 1st each year, 5% shall be given for State Missions.

The above are all of our regular offerings except the Heck-Jones offering in June, which is peculiar to North Carolina alone.

Both Societies of Baptist Women broke with our tradition regarding the means of raising money when they cooperated in having a bake sale at Tarrytown Mall for the benefit of "Contact Near," a new organization which operates a telephone ministry to deal with crisis situations. The Baptist Women had asked for and received permission from the Deacons to conduct a sale on February 12, 1972.

In 1975, a new Round Table Book Club was started. This book club is a luncheon group, meeting once a month to review currently approved books. On May 7, 1975 Arrington Baptist Women hosted a Dutch Luncheon at the YWCA. Dr.

John Cave gave a presentation, with slides and artifacts, of his mission work in Argentina.

As of May 4, 1976 Florence Avera Arrington Baptist Women had 165 women enrolled. Our presidents from 1882 to 1970 were:

1. Mrs. T.M. Arrington
2. Mrs. H.M. Finch
3. Mrs. D.M. Pearsall
4. Mrs. S.E. Ballentine
5. Mrs. W.D. Joyner
6. Mrs. S.T. Anderson
7. Mrs. E.H. Tharrington
8. Mrs. Don O. Bulluck
9. Mrs. E.E. Mayo
10. Mrs. Edgar Joyner
11. Mrs. W.D. Waters
12. Mrs. George Gorham, Jr.
13. Mrs. John R. Lee
14. Mrs. S.T. Anderson
15. Mrs. W.D. Clark
16. Mrs. Harrison Potter
17. Mrs. Helen Bulluck
18. Mrs. Douglas Moore
19. Mrs. A.L. Stancil
20. Mrs. George L. Hooks, Jr.
21. Mrs. Glenn Carpenter

In 1971, the W.M.S. became Baptist Women. Since then, we have had three presidents of the Florence Avera Arrington Baptist Women: Mrs. Mac Brown, Mrs. Quinton Hatcher, and Mrs. Don Haynes, the incumbent.

When the W.M.S. was divided into two Societies in 1962, it was necessary to have a W.M.U. director to coordinate the work of two Societies and the youth organizations. The women who served in this capacity have been the following:

1962-1963	Mrs. Harrison Potter
1964-1965	Mrs. W.D. Clark
1966-1967	Mrs. Helen Bulluck
1968	Mrs. Alfred Stancil
1969-1970	Mrs. George L. Hooks, Jr.
1971-1972	Miss Helen Daughtridge
1973-1974	Mrs. R.B. Edmondson
1975-1976	Mrs. Glenn Carpenter

Sunbeam Band—1948

W.M.U. Youth Work

"Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." Proverbs 20:11.

Sunbeam Band

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." II Timothy 3:15.

Mrs. James Fox founded the Sunbeam Band in 1904, leading them until her death in 1926. The Sunbeams included boys and girls up to twelve years of age.

The years following Mrs. Fox's death were marked by many difficulties as Mrs. S.T. Anderson, Sunday School Superintendent of the Primary Department, sought to teach missions to a small group between Sunday School and Church.

In 1942, Mrs. F.H. Peters became leader and was followed

by Mrs. A.L. Stancil in 1945. From 1942 to 1946, the Sunbeams received recognition for being A-1 on the Standard of Excellence.

By 1948, the Sunbeams had reached a membership of 60, so were divided. Mrs. T.S. Watson and Mrs. Kenneth Tucker led the four and five year olds, with the assistance of Katherine Batten. They were named the Hilda Mayo Sunbeam Band in honor of Miss Hilda Mayo, one of our girls serving as State W.M.U. Youth Director.

The six to eight year olds were led by Mrs. A.L. Stancil and Mrs. Leslie Hill. This group was called the Mary Ella Fox Sunbeams in memory of Mrs. Fox.

Each year the Sunbeams observed Focus Week with activities planned to inform the church about their work. In May 1948, they gave a program for their parents. Forty-two boys and girls participated. Both groups were recognized as A-1 during 1949-1950.

In 1951, a group of eight year olds was organized and named the Arthur Gillespie World Friends. Mrs. Tom Braswell and Mrs. A.H. Phillips, Jr. were among the first leaders.

These three groups, together with a youth director who coordinated all of the youth work, continued in this way until 1956 when the need was felt to have a director for each age-level organization. Some of the Sunbeam Band directors who served until 1970 were Mrs. W.F. Jones, Mrs. A.H. Phillips, Jr., Mrs. Harold Austin, and Mrs. Louis Rickman.

In 1970, a new plan was adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. The younger children, birth through five years were called Mission Friends. Mrs. Louis Rickman and Mrs. Rhaford Garner were the first Mission Friends directors. At

first, small and weak, by 1973, the enrollment began to grow, with Mrs. Quentin Hatcher and Mrs. Jack Banning as leaders.

Young Woman's Auxiliary

"That they may teach the young women." Titus 2:4.

"Laborers together with God." I Cor. 3:9.

The Y.W.A. was begun by Miss Ada Shearin, who led them from 1911 to 1922. Others who led until 1935 were Mrs. J. Presley Warren and Mrs. S.E. Ballentine. In 1932, Mrs. Warren accompanied Virgie Gupton, the first Y.W.A. girl to go to Ridgecrest. Since then, many of our Y.W.A. girls have had this privilege. Other leaders have been Mrs. A.T. Cronenberg in 1935; Mrs. A.L. Stancil in 1938; Mrs. D.E. Bulluck in 1943; and Mrs. C.C. Wallace.

In 1955, Mrs. E.F. Duke, leader, accompanied Y.W.A. member Janice Murchison on a mission tour to Glorieta. Mrs. Grover Robbins also made this tour which was conducted by Janet Wilson, North Carolina Youth Director.

In 1942, 1945, 1947, and 1952, the Y.W.A.'s were recognized as A-1 on the Standard of Excellence.

In 1956, Katherine Batten was presented the Y.W.A. Citation for completing additional mission requirements.

From 1960-1970, Mrs. Herbert Smiley, Mrs. Russell Edmondson, and Mrs. Dennis Bennett were the Y.W.A. leaders. During these years, a highlight in the lives of 15 young women Y.W.A.s was the White Bible Ceremony in which a white Bible was presented to each of these brides-to-be.

In 1970, the program changed again. Now high school Y.W.A.s became Acteens, and the girls above high school age through 29 years became Baptist Young Women. Mrs.

Graham Herring was the first B.Y.W. president, with Mrs. George Hooks, Jr. as consultant.

Girls' Auxiliary Coronation—1959

Girls' Auxiliary

"I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." Psalm 18:1.

Realizing the need for an organization between Sunbeams and Y.W.A.'s, in 1915 Mrs. I.W. Rose began the Girls' Auxiliary. These girls were aged 9 through 15.

Mrs. V.D. Huggins was one of the early leaders. Others who led until 1940 were Mrs. George L. Parker, Mrs. E.F. Duke, Mrs. T.S. Watson, and Mrs. W.D. Waters.

On June 6, 1939 Betsy Ann Bulluck and Lola Jean Parker were crowned our first Queens in Girls' Auxiliary while attending the State G.A. House Party at Meredith College. On

June 7th, Betsy was chosen as State Queen, her responsibility being to give the devotional at the House Party the following year. In 1941, she became a Queen Regent.

In 1943, the first Coronation was held in our church, at which time Jean Daughtridge and Jean Shields became Queens Regent.

By 1949, eight Queens in the Coronation received their crowns from Hilda Mayo, State W.M.U. director. These girls were Leah Lee, Sallie Brown Ellen, Lucinda Oliver, Patricia Harris, Betty Sue Cash, Peggy Jo Geddy, Margaret Williams, and Katherine Batten. Leaders serving during these years were Mrs. Edgar Joyner, Mrs. L.O. Gupton, Mrs. George Davis, and Mrs. George Gorham, Jr.

The Junior and Intermediate G.A.'s received A-1 recognition by the Standard of Excellence for 1943 through 1946, and again in 1955. In 1959, the two Junior groups were recognized as Honor Groups, holding this level of achievement until 1970 when the program changed.

In October of 1956, the third group of Junior G.A.'s was begun. Now there were the following groups: 9 year old girls—"Elizabeth Hale" (missionary to Malaysia); 10 year old girls—"Otis and Martha Brady" (newly appointed missionaries from North Roanoke Association); 11 and 12 year old girls—"Majorie Glass" (newly appointed missionary from North Roanoke Association); and Intermediate Girls—"Dr. and Mrs. C.W. Applewhite" (newly appointed missionaries from Statesville, N.C.).

Also in 1956, a G.A. director began to coordinate the work for this last age group. Directors serving from 1956 to 1970 were Mrs. A.L. Stancil, Mrs. Dean Roberts, Mrs. Jeff Batts, and Mrs. Robert Martin.

By 1955, a large group of girls were prepared for Coronation. This yearly Coronation service continued through 1970, when the program structure changed.

These Coronation services recognized the girls who had advanced in their Forward Steps by memorizing scripture passages and gaining mission knowledge. Their work had to be approved by a church Reviewing Council, with the higher step material being sent to the State Office in Raleigh for approval. The Forward Steps were: Maiden, Lady-in-Waiting, Princess, Queen, Queen-with-a-Scepter, Queen Regent and Queen Regent in Service. Queen Regent in Service was an optional step, recognized by North Carolina several years before Southwide recognition.

In 1958, there were 53 girls being recognized, and in 1959 Carol Joyner became the first Queen Regent in Service in our church. Other girls who achieved this honor were:

1960—Becky DeRatt
1961—Gloria McDonald
1962—Jean Joyner, Mary Wright Edmondson, Ann Chandler
1963—Ann Griffin, Johanne Vaughan, Lona Batten, Cora M. Bell
1964—Ann Bell
1967—Jane Carol Abernathy, Carol Lee Barnes, Debbie Rawls, Jeannie Beth Cherry, Donna Osterkamp
1969—Lee Rawls, Millie Shields

On October 1, 1958 the fifth group of Girls' Auxiliary was formed. This Intermediate group was named "Mrs. C.F. Clarke" in honor of the missionary nurse serving in Japan.

In June 1963, Cora Mac Bell and Linda Faye Jordan, with Mrs. A.L. Stancil as counselor, attended the G.A. 50th An-

niversary Convention in Memphis, Tennessee. Three thousand girls were in attendance.

October 1970 brought a new look to the missionary program. Girls' Auxiliary became Girls in Action for girls in grades one through six, and Acteens for Junior High and Senior High girls. Mrs. Phillip Riley was the first Girls in Action director and Mrs. A.L. Stancil was the first Acteen director.

The Girls in Action began work on Mission Adventures and by 1972 Sharon Austin, Lisa Briggs, Tammy Blevins, Lori Hatcher, Celia Horne, Lauren Hubbard, and Mary Ward Robbins received badges for work completed. Laura Edwards received badges 1 and 2.

The Acteens substituted "Studiact" (study and activities) for the Forward Step Program. On September 10, 1972 twenty-two girls were presented in a Recognition Service. Donna Lou Haynes was the first Queen Regent in Service under the new program. The next year, Donna Lou served as Page at the North Carolina Annual W.M.U. meeting held in Raleigh.

During the summer of 1973, a former Acteen, Millie Shields was part of the Teen Mission which witnessed in national parks across the United States. In October of 1973, the director, Mrs. A.L. Stancil, was part of a Leadership Team which toured the State of Pennsylvania.

By 1915, all four W.M.U. young peoples' organizations had been formed and were functioning under a Youth Director elected by the W.M.U.

Some directors serving in this capacity until 1956 when directors were needed for each age-level were:

1941—Mrs. Ambler Speight

1946-1947—Mrs. D. Ernest Bulluck

1948-1949—Mrs. Edgar Joyner
1950-1951—Mrs. W.D. Waters
1952-1953—Mrs. M.S. Hayworth
1954-1956—Mrs. Alfred Stancil

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Psalm 16:6.

The Martha Gilliland Baptist Women

"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves." I Peter 3:4,5.

"Laborers together with God." I Cor. 3:9.

In the church year 1960-1961, a committee was appointed to discuss the feasibility of having two missionary societies. This committee was drawn from both day and night circles with the following women serving: Mrs. E.F. Duke, Mrs. S.T. Anderson, Mrs. Helen Bulluck, Mrs. Kirby Hawkins, Jr., and Miss Helen Daughtridge.

The decision having been made to take this step, the night W.M.S. was organized and began functioning in 1961-1962, with Miss Helen Daughtridge as the first president.

The night society was made up largely of women who had worked outside the home. Instead of being circles only, they were now a society, requiring more officers and larger responsibilities. It took a little time for these changes to be absorbed and reckoned with.

In 1963, the constitution and by-laws were changed. In 1964, the society discontinued the "Milk Fund" and began

serving refreshments and presenting programs at the Boys' Training School. In October of 1965, the Educational Fund was discontinued.

By 1967, the society had attained "Approved" status. Only a lack of enlisting new members prevented "Advanced" rating.

In 1968, the work was reaching out in many directions. A committee of Mrs. K.E. Hawkins, Jr., Mrs. George Hooks, Jr., Mrs. Grover Robbins, and Mrs. A.L. Stancil revised the constitution of both societies; $72.00 was given to the Benevolence Committee for Christmas Cheer; $27.00 was contributed for school lunches for a Junior High girl; refreshments for Nash-Mont Nursing Home and Edgecombe Boarding Home were supplied; Christmas in September boxes were sent to Rev. and Mrs. Marvin Sorrels, missionaries to the Indians in Muskogee, Oklahoma; and a contribution was made to a Lebanese student.

In September 1968, a prayer retreat was conducted by the W.M.U. and the church staff in the interest of the Young Americans Week Crusade.

By October 1968, there were 109 members in six groups in the "Approved" night W.M.S. Society members helped with the G.A. Mother-Daughter Banquet and gave an offering to the Baptist World Alliance for Baptist Women's work around the world.

On June 13, 1969 a Prayer Retreat was held in the Chapel. Special prayer was made for the Home Mission Board and for the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans.

The night society agreed on and chose as its official name "The Martha Gilliland Woman's Missionary Society" on October 1, 1970.

Other activities included helping Baskerville and Fannie Gorham Schools with lunch money; filling ditty bags for servicemen overseas; bringing food and clothes to the church; and contributing to G.A. Focus Week.

Then the society made preparations to give Dr. Martha Gilliland a much needed piece of equipment by giving each member a "Martha" box which she was to fill with money.

Now health kits were prepared for migrants in North Carolina; old newspapers were taken to the local sheltered workshop; and magazines placed in laundromats.

"Distinguished" status was achieved by the society in 1970.

1971 was a furlough year for Dr. Martha and she returned to speak at a prayer meeting on August 18th, followed by a social hour in the Fellowship Hall. In this year also, the society redressed the dolls for our Day Care Center; sent gifts to the local mental health center; some members attended the Retreat at Camp Mundo Vista; and the society dropped back to "Advanced" rating.

In 1972, the Florence Avera Arrington and the Martha Gilliland Baptist Women combined their efforts to raise money for Contact Near, a new organization in town. Since our custom of raising funds only by tithes and offerings had remained unchanged, the women asked and received permission from the deacons to raise funds by holding a bake sale at Tarrytown Mall. It was felt that since the money would not go to our church, this would be an acceptable procedure. A total of $207 was secured for Contact Near.

For some time, the night society had been having a picnic meeting in July. In 1972, the day society was invited to a joint meeting and picnic on the church grounds. This has become a looked-to event for both societies.

On August 27, 1972 Katherine and Norman Burnes, who were preparing to go to Israel as foreign missionaries, returned to our church to speak and take part in the "Katherine Batten Burnes Day." Katherine is the first foreign missionary to go out of our fellowship.

In 1973, two Nigerian students at Chowan College spoke on their native tribes and customs before the night society. Both societies collaborated during W.M.S. Focus Week with a Pie Fellowship. Also, the planned-for gift to Martha Gilliland was consummated when her name-sake society presented her a gift of $1000 for a new delivery table for the new maternity ward at Ogbomosho, Nigeria.

Also in 1973, some members acted as hostesses for the Marketplace Ministry under the leadership of Rev. Gerald Niece; $25 was given to the church Building Fund in memory of Mrs. Alice Temple; gifts of toiletries were taken to the nursing homes; and 15 boxes of Christmas sweets were delivered to fire stations, post offices, hospitals, on Christmas Eve. Also in 1973, the Martha Gilliland Society was again of "Distinguished" status.

A reception for new church members was held in May 1974; choir suppers were prepared for the Youth Choir; a Prayer Retreat was held under the leadership of Miss Martha Franks, retired missionary to China, during W.M.S. Focus Week; a gift was sent to Dr. Martha Gilliland, in the states for surgery on her right hand; a Christmas in August package was sent to missionary Judy Bair at First Polish Baptist Church, Brooklyn, New York; clothes were sent to the nursing homes; and a $27 gift contributed to Gilgal Baptist Church for Bibles.

In 1975, much was done for the Christian Fellowship Home for Men such as fish frys, picnics, spaghetti suppers, and

cakes. Contributions were continued to the Chowan College Fund and to Vacation Bible School refreshments. A birthday gift was sent to Katherine Burnes and refreshments and clothes delivered to the sheltered workshop. A tea was held for new and prospective members and a "welcome" meal prepared for our new minister of music and family.

From 1962 to 1976, the presidents of Martha Gilliland Baptist Women have been as follows:

1. Miss Helen Daughtridge
2. Mrs. K.E. Hawkins, Jr.
3. Miss Emily Williams
4. Mrs. K.E. Hawkins, Jr.
5. Mrs. Charles Harrison
6. Mrs. H.L. Bell
7. Mrs. J.R. Everett
8. Mrs. Ivey Powell

"Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings." Psalm 17:8.

CHAPTER XII

WE REMEMBER OUR MEN'S WORK

"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." I Thessalonians 2:4.

The Brotherhood

Our Brotherhood began in 1952 under the aegis of Dr. Kincheloe. Horace Eason was guest speaker for the initial meeting and again when they celebrated their tenth anniversary.

What is a Brotherhood? Dr. Douglas Branch gave this answer in September 1954: "The Brotherhood is engaged in opening the floodgates of consecration and knowledge, so that God's power may flow through the lives of millions of dedicated men for the accomplishment of the purposes of Divine

Grace." Our Brotherhood was encouraged and helped, not only by Dr. Kincheloe, but by Rev. G.N. Cowan, Rev. Eslie Phillips, and Dr. Branch.

Through 1952, the Woman's Missionary Society had carried the responsibility for and leadership of the Royal Ambassadors since their beginning in 1915. Now the years 1953-1956 were to be the transition years, marking the transfer of leadership and responsibility for the boys' work from the Missionary Society to the Brotherhood. This was done slowly and gradually in order to make the transfer as smooth as possible.

On January 2, 1959 the Brotherhood Worship Committee—with W.M. Wester, chairman, and John A. Harper, co-chairman—submitted ten suggestions to the church (subject to the pastor's approval). These suggestions included proposals "for stimulating interest in church and Sunday School; a Father-Son Service and social hour; a special men's service with singing by the Brotherhood Chorus; attractive business-size cards of invitation to our worship services and Sunday School to be distributed to contacts; a canopy over the Western Avenue church entrance; preparation of a brochure of names, addresses, and phone numbers of all church members, with officers, committees, and a chart of the church building; placement of higher watt bulbs in the light fixtures of the sanctuary; some backing on the baptistry doors to eliminate shadows during baptizings; erection of Sunday School Directory in the building; and endeavor to spot visitors at our services and make them welcome."

At about this time, a roll of the Brotherhood lists 201 members, with the following group leaders:

J.B. Avent	F.I. Rudy	G. Giddeons
J.N. Batten	E.H. Tharrington	R.B. Edmondson

James Best	W.C. Walston	Tom Hicks
J.C. Cox	Merle Williams	R.V. Mattox
S.B. Holland	R.C. Pearce	F.H. Peters
F.B. Longest	Roy A. Daughtridge	W.W. Reavis
H.A. Sturgess	W.M. Wester	J.C. Parker

According to a Ten-Year Brotherhood Growth Graph prepared by Calvin Parker for the years 1960-1969, the peak enrollment for this period was reached in 1965 with approximately 85. In 1967, it declined, and rose again to 50 in 1968. Since then it declined rapidly into non-existence in 1969.

In 1968, the Brotherhood sponsored a bus trip to Richmond, Virginia to participate in the Foreign Mission Board appointment service. Many members took advantage of this opportunity.

Though the Brotherhood died, the Royal Ambassadors continued under the leadership of a few dedicated men of the church. Since this is true, it would seem reasonable to replace the word "Brotherhood" on our financial sheets with the words "Royal Ambassadors." This hasn't been done.

It is believed that Dr. Branch's last public appearance in our church took place on March 19, 1962 when he addressed the Brotherhood and their ladies.

In 1953, the enrollment was 300. In 1958, there were 250 members and from 1959 until the Brotherhood's demise in 1969, it never again reached 100.

The presidents of the Brotherhood were:

1952-1953	Dr. John High	1963	Harry Potter
1954-1956	A.L. Stancil	1964	Irvin Rackley
1957	W.D. Clark	1965	Dr. Wm. R. Jones
1958	J.R. Batten	1966	Ray Vaughn
1959	H.J. Harris	1967	Robert W. Rawls
1960-1961	T.H. LeCroy	1968	Douglas Barnes, Jr.
1962	John R. Lee		

R.A. Recognition Service—1959

The Royal Ambassadors

"Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart!" Psalm 19:111.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." II Cor. 5:20.

In 1915, the Royal Ambassadors were organized by Mrs. Laura Parker Lucas as part of the mission responsibility of the Woman's Missionary Union. This organization later came to be called the Laura Parker Lucas Royal Ambassadors in her honor.

Early leaders who took special interest in boys aged 9 through 15 were Mrs. E.L. Taylor and Mrs. J.M. Scott. Others who served from 1940-1956 were: Mrs. Charlie Gibson, Mrs. E.F. Duke, Mrs. M.T. Morris, Mrs. Paul Wells, Mrs. Mae Knowles, Mr. and Mrs. John C. Gray, Mr. and Mrs. W.D.

Waters, and Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Stancil.

The Junior and Intermediate R.A.'s were recognized as A-1 on the Standard of Excellence during 1942-1946.

In November of 1952, eight boys with two counselors attended an overnight State R.A. Congress held in Raleigh. In 1953, the North Roanoke Associational R.A. Conclave was held in our church, with large attendance on a "bad weather" night. A large number of boys attended the Associational Camp at Chowan or the Regional Camp at Fort Caswell each summer.

The regimen for R.A. work consists of Recreation, Missions, and Ranking work. The Ranking program means scripture to be memorized and mission facts to be learned. The ranks are Page, Squire, Knight, Ambassador, Ambassador Extraordinary, and Ambassador Plenipotentiary.

Counselors purchased Royal Ambassador "T" shirts bearing the emblem in order to motivate the boys to pass off their work before a Reviewing Council who must approve their work. The first boys to pass their work were recognized along with the girls in Girls' Auxiliary when they held the Coronation. In 1954, the boys had their own Recognition Service, each boy wearing his R.A. "T" shirt.

In November 1955, twenty-six boys were recognized in the Recognition Service, with Truman Smith, State R.A. Field Worker, presenting the awards. Bill Stancil was the first Ambassador Plenipotentiary in our church. There were four Ambassadors Extraordinary: Carlton Harlow, Turner Coley, Bill Waters, and John Waters. The next year Carlton became our second Ambassador Plenipotentiary.

In August 1956, a group of R.A.'s from North and South Carolina, led by our State R.A. leader, B.W. Jackson, made a

mission tour to Cuba. Bill Stancil of our church was a member of this group. Bill was recognized at the state level for his accomplishment in November 1956 and served as Page to the Baptist State Convention in Greensboro.

The years 1953-1956 were the transition years during which sponsorship for R.A. work was gradually transferred from women to men—from the W.M.U. to the Brotherhood. In 1970, the men assumed responsibility for boys age six and up. Mr. C.R. Shields was chairman of the R.A. Joint Committee during the transition period.

Two Ambassadors, Ronnie Smiley and Mayo Stancil, attended the R.A. National Congress in Fort Worth, Texas, August 12-14, 1958. They went on a mission tour with others from this area.

In 1961, four boys—Willard Williams, Billy Fryar, Roger Stancil, and George Millar—attended the State R.A. Congress held in Statesville.

Men who led the boys in succeeding years were Herbert Smiley, Ernest Taylor, Julian Gatling, Don Biggerstaff, Gerald Brabham, and others.

A National R.A. Congress was held in August of 1963 in Washington, D.C. Counselor Ernest Taylor took five R.A.'s to this meeting. They were Rusty Russ, George Millar, Roger Stancil, Billy Fryar, and Willard Williams.

In 1965, August 10-31, eighteen boys from the United States were given the opportunity to serve on a mission tour to Guatemala, each paying his own expenses. There were only two from North Carolina. Roger Stancil of our church was one of them.

They worked hard leveling a playground, painting buildings, making benches and witnessing in small local churches.

They also had the privilege of knowing missionaries as persons.

Hubert Abernathy was director of Royal Ambassadors in 1971 through 1974. In 1975, Willard Williams became director.

At the present time, there are 3 Ambassador groups; two groups of Crusaders and one group of Pioneers (including both Junior and Senior High boys). Our 1976 budget allows $600 for Royal Ambassadors.

The program for Royal Ambassadors has changed through the years but continues to promote missions, wholesome recreation, and opportunity for advancement as the boys are led by dedicated men of the church.

"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee." Psalm 63:1.

CHAPTER XIII

WE REMEMBER OUR VIPs

"But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Luke 22:26.

VIPs in the Local Church

"The Lord lifteth up the meek." Psalm 147:6.

It has taken a host of Christians serving through the years to fill the ever-increasing offices and opportunities for making our Lord known. This is intended as a praise of gratitude for all the committee members, baby sitters, secretaries, group leaders, teachers, choir members, ushers, cooks, visitors, pianists, and faithful pray-ers who have joyfully given their time and talents for 96 years.

Most of our church members love the Lord and want to

serve him in whatever capacity they are able. Three persons have been chosen to represent the devotion of our people: a druggist who gave the grape juice for the Lord's Supper for many years; a busy wife and mother who, able to make only meager monetary contributions, asked permission to launder the Lord's Supper cloths, which she kept snowy white as long as she was able; and the homemaker who had her own maid, yet chose to come to the church weekly in order to personally polish the silver collection plates.

For these unheralded acts of love and the myriad of others, we praise God; like our "tears in his bottle," He knows and records each one.

VIPs Who Reached Beyond Our Church

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Luke 24:47-48.

Some of our members have been privileged to serve outside the local fellowship, reaching out to the Association, the State, the Nation, and the World.

"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord." Matthew 10:25.

We no longer know who among us served in the Tar River Association, but in the Roanoke Association Mrs. W.D. Joyner served as Associational Superintendent of the Woman's Missionary Union for about ten years. Mrs. Edgar Joyner and Mrs. W.D. Waters each held this same office for five-year terms. Mrs. D.O. Bulluck served three years as G.A. leader in the Roanoke Association.

Miss Hilda Mayo, graduate of the W.M.U. Training School (now Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), served as Y.W.A. president of the Roanoke Associational Y.W.A.; Director of Christian Education in Roanoke Association in 1952-1955; and Director of Associational Missions in the North Roanoke Association in 1955-1960.

At the state level, Hilda served as Young Peoples' Secretary of the W.M.U. in 1947-1951; five years as Second Vice President of the N.C. Woman's Missionary Union, with special responsibilities to the Business Women's Circles; two years on the Committee on Committees for the Baptist State Convention; and two years on the Nominating Committee of the W.M.U. of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Since 1960, Hilda has been an Associate in the Sunday School Department of the N.C. Baptist Convention. Her responsibilities are with the Preschool work, the mentally retarded, and church libraries.

Mrs. John R. Lee served five years as W.M.U. Prayer Chairman in the North Roanoke Association and one year with the Region as W.M.U. Mission Study Chairman.

Mrs. Paul Wilkins served five years as W.M.U. Stewardship Chairman in the North Roanoke Association.

Mrs. J.R. Everett helped in the North Roanoke Associational Vacation Bible School Clinics for several years. She served at the State level in various positions: for twenty-two years as Junior Approved Worker; taught Junior Leadership for the Training Union Department in this and other states; directed the Junior Department of the N.C. Training Union Assembly at Caswell each summer; taught leadership courses at the Assembly at Fruitland; helped the Sunday School Department in Enlargement Campaigns in this and other

states; and led the Conference for the Vacation Bible School Clinic at Wingate one year. For several years Mrs. Everett taught the boys and girls at Ridgecrest during the Southwide Training Union Weeks.

Rev. John W. Privott, minister and Associational Missionary of the North Roanoke Baptist Association since 1960, served the Atlantic Baptist Association in the same capacity from 1958 to 1960. He has served the N.C. Baptist Convention as a General Board member; as a committee member on Assemblies and Camps; and as a consultant in the Training Union and Sunday School Departments.

Mr. Privott's interest in Home Missions has taken him to visit the fields in Louisville, Kentucky, New Orleans and New Mexico. In 1973, the family went to Guatemala City to learn of the Southern Baptist work with the Spanish-speaking people there. They also went to Coban and Sebol where Southern Baptists work with the Indians.

Mrs. John W. Privott was Clerk of the North Roanoke Association for five years. She served as a member of the W.M.U. Executive Committee of the state convention for two years and as a consultant with the Training Union and Sunday School Departments in Preschool work.

Mrs. E.E. Mayo has contributed two daughters to our fellowship who have served long and well: Miss Hilda Mayo (above) and Mrs. Alfred L. Stancil.

Mrs. Stancil has not only served the local church since 1937, but has served the North Roanoke Associational W.M.U. as Counselor, Leader or Director of each division of youth work; as W.M.U. Director; as a member of the Associational W.M.U. Executive Board for twenty-five years; and as Associational Director of the G.A. Camp for eleven years.

For the state convention, Mrs. Stancil served seven years on the W.M.U. Executive Board as Chairman of the G.A. Committee; two years as State Junior G.A. Camp Director at N.C. Baptist Assembly at Southport, N.C.; one year as State Intermediate G.A. Camp Director at Fruitland Assembly; as a member of the W.M.U. Camp Development Committee (for the building of Camp Mundo Vista); and as a member of the State Committee of 11 to study Baptist policy in differing churches.

For two years, Mrs. Stancil led the G.A. Leadership Conferences at Ridgecrest for the Southern Baptist Convention.

Mrs. Don Tippette served in the North Roanoke Association as Acteen Director in 1973 and 1974.

Mrs. George Hooks, Jr., our former Educational Director, has served in the North Roanoke Association as Junior Training Union Leader for three years and as Adult Training Union Leader for three years. She served the Associational W.M.U. as Baptist Women's Director for three years; as assistant W.M.U. Director two years; as a member of the Nominating Committee for two years; and on special assignments such as teaching in Mission Study Institutes and Associational Vacation Bible School Clinics.

In 1960, Mrs. Hooks was president of the North Carolina Baptist Education and Music Conference (for Ministers of Education and Music). She served for several years on the faculty at Caswell Baptist Assembly during Training Union Week teaching methods to Intermediates and working with Juniors in Training Union in the Region.

In the fall of 1976, Mrs. Hooks begins a three-year term in the North Roanoke Association as W.M.U. Director.

Roger Lamb, a former Minister of Music, served North

Roanoke as Song Leader and William B. Grisham, our present Minister of Music and Youth, has just been elected to be Church Music Director for 1976-1977.

Earl Long, former Minister of Education, served the North Roanoke as Training Union Director.

Diversity of Gifts

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." I Cor. 12:4.

Mrs. R.V. Mattox has reared two outstanding sons, neither of whom are members of our church, but each has maintained close ties with our fellowship. Both James and Bernard have spoken to and visited in our church frequently.

Rev. James O. Mattox is a graduate of Wake Forest University and the Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. While serving as Chaplain in Korea, he was awarded the Bronze Star.

Rev. Mattox served pastorates in Hertford and Red Springs and is now pastor of the First Church in Rutherfordton. He has been a member of the Board of Trustees of the N.C. Baptist Homes for the Aging for sixteen years, serving as president of the Board for two years. He has served on various committees of the N.C. Baptist Convention and is currently on the General Board. James has also been Moderator of the Chowan, Robeson, and Green River Associations.

Bernard Mattox—better known by his professional name, Gregory Walcott—is a lay preacher and an actor. He has led revivals in California, Texas, in Charlotte and Greensboro, N.C., and in Japan. In 1964 and 1965, he was vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Gregory Walcott has appeared in many movies such as "Battle Cry," "Mr. Roberts," and "Man of the East." He is a

regular on television, portraying roles in such dramas as "Bonanza," "Last Hero," and "The Quest."

He directed, produced, and portrayed the leading role in the movie "Bill Wallace of China." This is the story of a Southern Baptist missionary doctor who was murdered when the Communists took over China. Bill Wallace was stationed at the Stout Memorial Hospital in Wuchow, China.

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us." Romans 12:6.

Our church fellowship has been a seedbed for many doctors and nurses but only one woman doctor has emerged. She is Roberta G. Williams, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Williams.

Roberta was a member of the G.A.'s, Training Union, and Choir. When she graduated from Senior High, she was a National Merit Scholar Finalist and received the Certificate of Honor. At Duke University, she was secretary of the Pre-medical Society in 1962 and president in 1963 when she received her B.S. degree.

At the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, she was secretary of the Whitehead Council and Chairman of the National Committee on Medical Ethics. From 1963-1968, she did research on Apexcarodiography in the Department of Cardiology. Roberta received her M.D. from the UNC School of Medicine in 1968.

In 1968-1969, Dr. Williams interned at the N.C. Memorial Hospital at Chapel Hill. In 1969-1970, she served as Pediatric Resident at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City. In 1970-1973, she was a Fellow in Cardiology at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston, Mass., serving as Assistant in Cardiology in 1973-1974.

Since 1973, Dr. Williams has been an Instructor in Pediatrics at Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston; and since 1974, an Associate in Cardiology at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston.

Roberta has collaborated with other doctors in writing several abstracts. One she has authored alone is on the subject of Echocardiographic findings in transposition of the great arteries with subpulmonary stenosis. She has co-authored seven other publications, the latest of which is a textbook now in the process of publication. The book is being published by Little, Brown and Company and is titled "Ultrasound Diagnosis of Congenital Heart Disease."

Dr. Williams has lectured widely in the United States and Canada on the various aspects of heart problems, especially in children.

Miss Sherrie Brabham, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald W. Brabham, graduated from Rocky Mount Senior High School in 1969 with honors.

Having been actively involved in the church, especially in signing for the Silent People, Sherrie chose to go to UNC-Greensboro, where she received her B.A. degree in Audiology and Speech Pathology in 1973. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and graduated cum laude. In 1971, she was chosen Miss Rocky Mount.

While attending UNC-G, Sherrie served as an interpretor, signing at the First Baptist Church in Greensboro. She also worked with Jerry Potter, North Carolina missionary to the deaf, on the Educational Television Program "You the Deaf," which originated in Greensboro, and with Jimmy Morris on his program "Listen America" over Station WRAL, Raleigh, N.C.

Following her graduation from UNC-G, Sherrie entered Princeton Seminary on a one-year trial fellowship for Theological Education, preparatory to the Master of Divinity degree. During her three years at Princeton, she served as chaplain at the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf at Trenton, New Jersey. For one year, she was Student Assistant Pastor at the Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church in Princeton.

Presently, in the summer of 1976, Sherrie is researching the Old Testament for one of the seminary professors. In September, she will be a full-time chaplain at the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf in Trenton, New Jersey, in addition to other responsibilities.

Robert Lee Wynne, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe L. Wynne, received his B.A. degree from Wake Forest College in 1961.

After teaching social studies at the Newport News High School in 1961-1962, Robert joined the Peace Corps and served his two-year tour of duty at Kiriji Memorial College in Igbajo, Nigeria, West Africa. During his stay in Africa, our church made a contribution toward the purchase of a film projector to be used in his work.

When he returned stateside, Robert entered Southeastern Seminary at Wake Forest, N.C., where he studied in 1964.

In 1965, Robert married Miss Martie Spencer of Hampton, Virginia. While she completed her training at Norfolk General Hospital as a trained nurse, Robert taught in Portsmouth, Virginia.

In the fall of 1966, Robert again entered Southeastern Seminary to graduate in 1968 with a Master of Divinity degree.

In June 1969, he earned the Master of Theology degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

From September 1969 until August 1971, Robert was associate pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Portsmouth, Virginia. He was ordained at Calvary Baptist in February 1971.

While taking a course in Community Planning at Virginia Commonwealth University September 1971-June 1973, Robert served as youth pastor at the First Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia.

Since that time, he has been Director of Bethlehem Community Center in Richmond.

The Wynnes have two children, Christina Noel and Jonathan David.

VIPs in Other Fellowships

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." John 10:16.

"And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." I Cor. 12:6.

Three young people, having been brought up in our fellowship, after reaching maturity felt led to serve God under the aegis of other fellowships.

Miss Elizabeth Wheeless studied at a Presbyterian school in the Chicago area and went to India as a Presbyterian missionary. It is not known whether she remained with this denomination. It is certain that she married a Mr. Cunningham and served in India as a missionary for many years.

As a youth, Jasper Harper thought God was calling him to be a Baptist minister. Then he assisted Mrs. C.A.G. Thomas and others with the mission which became Southside Baptist

Church. Here he began to experience a need to be close to people, to share, and possibly lift their burdens. Jasper Harper felt the leading of the Spirit even more strongly when he came under the influence of Major Wilbur Young of the Salvation Army.

Feeling himself on the horns of a dilemma, Jasper took his problem to Dr. J.W. Kincheloe. His pastor counseled and blessed him, and he entered into his plan of serving God in this different fellowship.

Major Jasper Harper of the Salvation Army has been in this service thirty-two years and is presently (1976) stationed in Rocky Mount. His daughter, a talented musician, and her husband are now in training for Salvation Army service. When this training is completed, they will be commissioned Lieutenants.

Rev. Gene Gurganus grew up in our church, received his degree from the Bob Jones University, and went to East Pakistan as a foreign missionary with the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism. The local Falls Road Baptist Church has given him strong support.

When war came and East Pakistan became Bangladesh, Rev. Gurganus continued to serve there. Altogether, he and his family served eighteen years in this distressed area.

At the present time, Rev. Gurganus is in the United States doing home mission work under ABWE as representative to the Southeastern Region, headquartered in Greenville, S.C.

Our Southern Baptist Missionary VIPs

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15.

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" I Cor. 9:16.

Our Baptist Women sponsored Dr. J.B. Hipps when the women's organization was the Woman's Missionary Society. To sponsor meant remembering, praying for and paying part of the missionary's salary. At first, we paid $800, and later $1000, a year.

Dr. Hipps was the first missionary to be supported by our church. He was a missionary teacher at the University of Shanghai, China. The following excerpts are taken from letters written by Dr. Hipps to Mrs. John R. Lee prior to and following the Communist take-over:

"University of Shanghai, Feb. 2, 1948.

"The spring semester has opened with about 1200 students. We are just finishing five days holidays today for the Chinese New Year. There has been more use of fire crackers and general celebration of the New Year season than we have seen in years. This is perhaps due to the strain of the civil war.

"Everything is peaceful on the campus and in Shanghai, but the Communists have reached the Yangste River opposite Nanking. There is talk of the Nationalist defending the Yangste in spite of all the peace talk. If so, the war may come to Shanghai. There are also rumours that the Communists may be here in about two weeks and take over the city without a fight.

"If they come, they will eventually take over the University. Just how that will affect us missionaries, we cannot say. We may be prohibited from teaching religion or even English. We plan to stay as long as we can be useful and not embarrass our Chinese colleagues. There seems little danger to us personally,

but we may not be able to take out any of our belongings.

"We live from day to day not knowing what a day may bring forth. If we cannot carry on here Mrs. Hipps and I hope to go to Japan to teach in our Baptist College there. If this is not possible we will return to the States. We will keep you informed if we can. Mails may be stopped. Pray for us.

"April 10, 1949, University of Shanghai.

"It is said that 8,000,000 people now are on the point of starvation. If the war continues the best part of the rice producing section of the country will be greatly affected within the next month or so. This will add to the lack of food next year. How pathetic and tragic the condition of the masses of the people is! They are in the hands of men who are struggling for power.

"It is very difficult to carry on Christian work in the communist areas. Most missionaries have had to leave. Most of the country churches have not been able to carry on. No religion is being taught in the high schools there and the hospitals are carrying on with difficulty.

"We are still going on here in the University with more than 1100 students on the campus and more than 300 in the School of Commerce in the city. We hope to finish this term in May. We have a baptismal service every month in our church. Many students have become Christians this year.

"Most missionaries of all boards plan to stay in China. We will stay as long as we can. Pray for us.

"Dec. 6, 1949, Richmond, Va.

"We are here with mixed feelings—great regrets that we had to leave the University and China, but something of a relief to be free from Communist rule. It is something that has to be felt to understand. It is difficult to explain in writing.

"Briefly stated a group of about 10% of our faculty and staff led by a professor, and assistant professor, and an instructor, through threats, intimidations, and unscrupulous methods within a period of about two months got control of the newly organized Administrative Council of the University. They forced out the president, his chief secretary and the business manager and made it necessary for the Board of Directors to appoint an Administrative Committee taking the place of the president and to recognize the new council on the campus. This new council is composed of teachers, staff members, laborers, and students.

"There is a fight going on as to who shall control the University—the new council or the regular constituted Board of Directors. The same struggle is going on in the other Christian colleges and universities of China.

"The University is still a private college but controlled by a majority of communist influence on the new council. In spite of all the difficulties the University was re-opened in the fall with 1200 students, about 1/3 of whom are Christians. A few courses in religion are still being taught. Four single missionaries are still there teaching English chiefly. The communists wanted these missionaries to remain. The church and its work still goes on. What will happen in the future we do not know. The Chinese Christians are carrying on in a very fine way under great difficulties."

Following Dr. Hipps' return to the States and his retirement, the Foreign Mission Board, at our request, assigned Mrs. James Edward Humphrey as our new missionary. Mrs. Humphrey was born December 18, 1923 in Durham, N.C. She was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board as a missionary to Nigeria on April 6, 1948.

Mrs. Humphrey attended Wingate Junior College, Wingate, N.C.; Wake Forest; and the W.M.U. Training School in Louisville, Kentucky. Prior to her appointment, she gained experience as assistant to the Bursar, Wingate College; as library assistant, Wake Forest College; as educational director, Bragtown Baptist Church, Durham; and as mission worker during the summers of 1944, 1945, and 1946 at Whitesburg, McRoberts, and Neon, Kentucky with the Home Mission Board.

Mrs. Humphrey was stationed in Ogbomosho, Nigeria and, of course, knew the McKinley Gillilands. She speaks in glowing terms of the new seminary (June 11, 1955), the largest structure the Baptist had in Nigeria at that time. She said it was something Baptists all over the world could be proud of.

When Rachel Humphrey was forced to resign as a foreign missionary to Africa for health reasons, we were assigned Mrs. Charles T. Stephens, Jr.

Mrs. Stephens was born in Hildebrand, N.C. on October 5, 1940. She was Helen Yvonne Yoder. She and Mr. Stephens were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board to serve in Indonesia in December 1966. The Stephens have a son named Danny.

Mrs. Stephens' home address is Filbert, S.C. 29713. Her mission address is Djl. Hegarmonah 41, Bandung, Indonesia.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." II Cor. 4:7.

Rev. William McKinley Gilliland and Dr. Martha Jordan Gilliland have appeared in this history at length prior to this but, of course, must be included in this roll of our missionary VIPs. "Mac," so kind and understanding, has gone to be with

God, but Dr. Martha Gilliland still serves at the Baptist Hospital in Ogbomosho, Nigeria. Thoughts of Dr. Martha evoke memories of the moving experience when she addressed our congregation on the subject of the Bible quotation above. God help each of us to proclaim this gospel treasure which we have in our earthly bodies in such a way that the excellency of the power will be shown to be the power of God and not of ourselves.

Kathryn Batten Burnes

Kathryn Batten, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James R. Batten, was very active in the church youth programs. When she graduated from high school, she entered Duke University where she served as president of the Baptist Student Union. Kathryn also

met her future husband in the person of Norman Burnes III, a first year student at Southeastern Seminary.

Kathryn graduated from Duke in 1960 and married Norman that same summer. She taught school in Creswell and Creedmore, N.C.

Rev. Burnes is a native of Rome, Georgia and a graduate of Mercer University, Macon, Georgia. He received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. During his seminary training, he served one summer as youth director for the First Baptist Church in Mooresville, N.C. In his senior year at the seminary, he served two Baptist churches in Creswell.

From March 1967 to October 1968, Norman served as assistant pastor at the West Lynchburg Baptist Church. After that, he was pastor until June 1972, at which time Rev. and Mrs. Burnes were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board to be missionaries to Israel.

After language study, the Burnes arrived in Israel in 1973. They lived on the Mount of Olives in an Arabic village and served the West Bank. Kathryn worked with the women and children and Norman preached and served as Moderator of the Baptist Convention in Israel, composed of the thirty-nine Southern Baptist missionaries working there.

In August of 1975, Rev. and Mrs. Norman N. Burnes were transferred to Greece. There are 50,000 English-speaking Americans in Greece and the Burnes are the only missionaries ministering to their needs. Among the Americans working overseas, many wish to visit the Holy Land, so once a year Norman prepares them by means of lectures and slides before leading them on a guided tour of Israel.

In Greece he is the official representative of our Foreign

Mission Board. One of his duties requires him to fly to Kavala, Greece once a month to minister to the families working with the Voice of America.

Norman is a fourth generation missionary! His great-grandfather, William Henry Clarke, went to Nigeria in 1853. His grandfather, William Harvey Clark, went to Japan in 1897, to be followed a year later by his bride-to-be. They served in Japan for forty years. Norman's mother was born there. Coleman Clarke, Norman's uncle, was a missionary in Japan when World War II ended and retired on March 31, 1976.

Kathryn has the distinction of being the first foreign missionary to come out of our fellowship who is serving under the Southern Baptist Convention. She is the answer to countless prayers and, hopefully, the first of a long line of Ambassadors for Christ to follow her example.

Rev. and Mrs. Burnes have three children: Norman IV, born in 1962; Kathryn, born in 1966; and Robert, born in 1968.

Norman and Kathryn, on furlough in 1976, were honored by our church on June 12th and Norman was guest minister for the morning service on June 13th.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8.

CHAPTER XIV

AS WE REMEMBER OUR HERITAGE, WE ANTICIPATE OUR FUTURE

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders and they will tell thee." Deuteronomy 32:7.

Landmark Decisions

As we have reviewed the ninety-six years of our church history, we have recognized landmark decisions which have shaped our character and spirit, and will continue to influence our future.

June 1, 1880—The decision to begin a missionary Baptist church in the midst of a strong Primitive Baptist environment.

1880 and 1907—The decisions to build worthy houses of worship for God's glory.

1889—The decision to lend a helping hand to those in need.

1895—The decision to support and begin missions even while we were doing battle with our own financial problems.

1904—The decision to become self-supporting.

1919—The decision to remain free of entanglements with the National and World Council of Churches.

1954—The decision to appoint a Long-Range Planning Committee, which led to the acquiring of property and the enlargement of our physical plant.

1954—The decision to begin a Kindergarten and Child Care Center.

1957—The decision to write a church constitution permitting only white persons to join our fellowship.

1957—The decision to rotate deacons.

1960—The decision to age-grade adults in the Sunday School.

1969—The decision to delete "white persons" from the membership clause of our constitution, thus opening our fellowship to all races.

1972—The decision to write and publish our church history before our centennial in 1980.

1975—The decision to form a new fellowship group for our members aged fifty and over.

All these decisions have had tremendous impact on our individual and corporate lives. Now, even as we cling to our heritage, we must face the urgency of the future and prepare for it.

For the last thirty years, events have moved so rapidly that

methods, plans and terminology have been in a constant state of flux, making it difficult for the layman to keep abreast of the changes. At times, he has been tempted to give in to confusion and frustration.

But the future is not likely to hold any hope for the cessation of rapid change. So it is imperative that we learn how to meet it with equanimity, flexibility, and relaxed joy as we confront the enormous challenges.

As the time comes ever nearer for the glorious return of our Lord, we must find new innovative, imaginative, relevant ways to present the gospel to all people—where they are. Time is of the essence, as millions die out of Christ. The King's business is urgent! We, his messengers, must not fail him.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Revelation 21:3.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.